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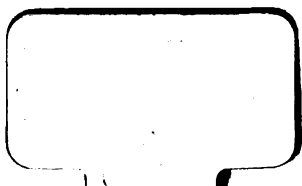
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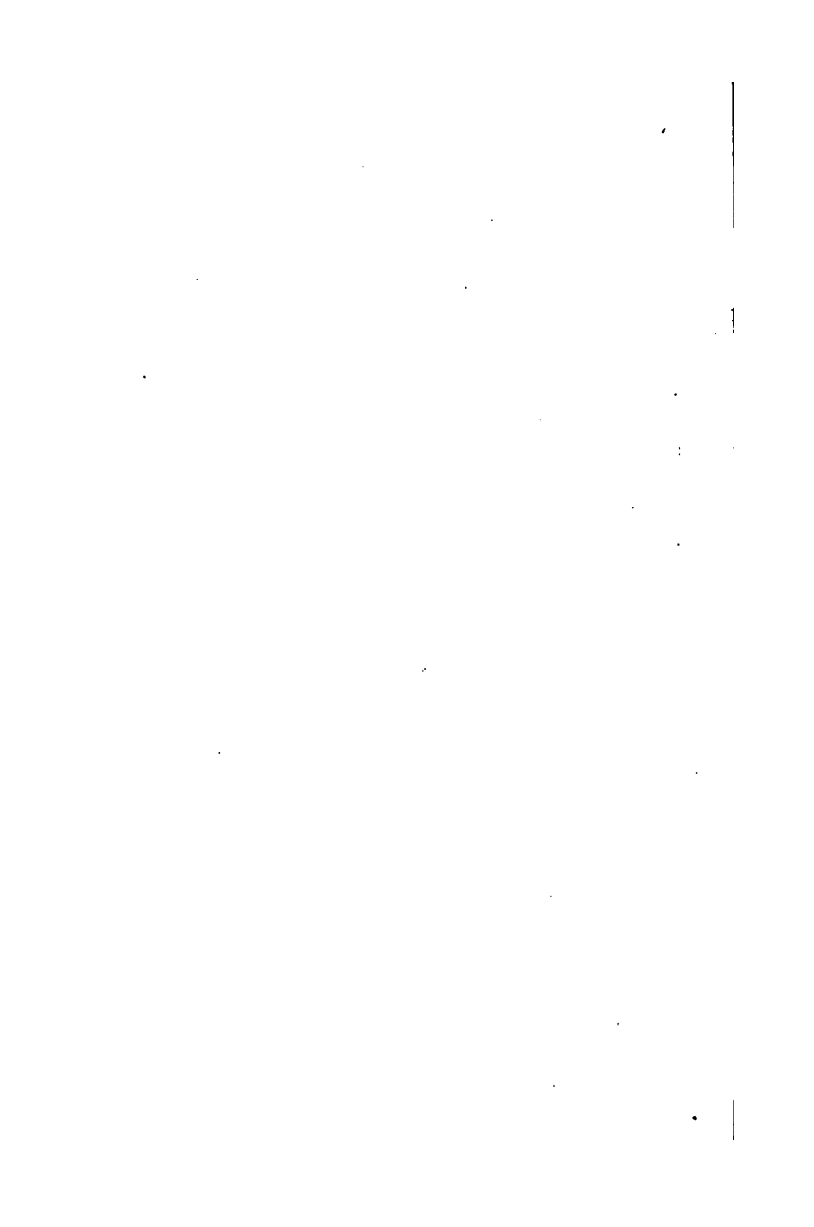




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GRACE ALFORD;

OR,

*The Way of Unselfishness.*

BY

C. M. SMITH.

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LONDON:

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GRACE ALFORD;

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CHAPTER I.

" The heart of childhood is all mirth,  
We frolic to and fro ;  
As free and blithe as if on earth  
Were no such thing as woe."

THE tide had reached its lowest ebb, and the sea left a wide reach of sand, and a broad ledge of low rocks covered with seaweed open to the bright summer sun, and free to any visitors who might wish to enjoy the smooth walk afforded by the former, or to explore the latter. It was a very lovely part of the Devonshire coast that Exmouth beach, not the side where the river Ex makes its junction with the sea, (which is not to be admired, being a flat extent of mud, neither fair nor salubrious,) but the shore on the other side of the town beneath the picturesque red cliffs. There the soft yellow



sands are pleasant to walk or sit upon, and huge masses of rock stand up, some solitary, others grouped together, affording sheltered nooks where children may play at hide-and-seek and their elders enjoy a book or a quiet chat. The beach is shut in, though not closely, by cliffs of red sandstone, rich in verdure and tapestried by a variety of flowers, chiefly of the vetch and convolvulus kinds.

On this glorious summer morning the shore was almost solitary, only two or three fisher-boys with their trousers tucked up to their knees and baskets on their arms, were collecting shell fish far out on the ledge of rocks among the thick seaweed. Suddenly there came dancing, springing, bounding with delight, a little girl about ten years old, to the edge of the low rocks. Her broad straw hat shaded her fair rosy face, and the hazel eyes which sparkled with pleasure, and the light breeze played with the soft brown hair, which curling at its own will, hung round her neck. She stopped when she had advanced over two or three of the masses of rock, and seemed overpowered by the beauty around her. The almost cloudless sky, the broad lights on the sea, the rich colouring both of the bare rocks close beneath her, and of the dark weed-clad further ledge, the basins of clear water between, the white-winged gulls soaring and wheeling round above, all was so beautiful, so rich in enjoyment that Grace Alford clasped her hands and breathed a long sigh in inexpressible delight. But she did not

stand many minutes silently enjoying all this loveliness, she must join in the expression of joy which all things round her uttered, and in the fulness of her heart longing to give voice to its feelings, she chanted in her clear childish tones some verses from Psalms often heard at church. It might well be that the song was not strictly musical, the tones not all correct, but they harmonized well enough with the wild glad cry of the birds, the notes of the breeze, and the soft murmurs of the returning sea. Grace had learned no ordinary songs, her notes of real loving thankfulness for all the beauty round her were what she had been taught by the choristers of the Church, where since her earliest childhood she had been led by her mother; and what more joyful or more fitting for the child seeking to give a voice to Nature than these inspired songs? No one was near to check that gladness, and for some little time Grace sang with heart and voice as she stepped lightly from one rock to another; but soon she came on a large clear pool of water in which the beautiful sea anemones were spreading themselves, extending their curious rays like chrysanthemum flowers in the warm beams of the sun. Grace's song was soon ended, and she stooped to admire them. Purple, crimson, pink, white, dark red, they lay in the transparent pool, the loveliest sea-things she had ever seen. Her little shaggy dog Muffie, who had been scampering about at his own will and occasionally barking at the sea gulls, now trotted

up to see what his mistress had stopped to look at, and after dipping in one feathery paw to examine, next put in his nose and touched one or two of the anemones. The delicate creatures quickly withdrew their rays, and fixed themselves to the sides of the rock, looking like lumps of jelly. Grace attempted to take them off, but they were far too strongly fixed for her to dislodge. She took one out of the water after many efforts, but found her captive instantly assumed its jelly form.

"Come, Muffie," she said to the dog, who had seemed to puzzle as gravely over the anemones as if he had been a philosopher, "we will leave the poor things to enjoy themselves; it is a pity to tease them this nice bright day, when they are so happy in the sun. We'll look for some more curious things."

The dog gave a short bark of joy, and he sprang after the child as she leaped over the little pools which divided the rocks.

There were plenty of shell fish and small sea creatures to attract Grace and amuse her in the basins of clear sea water, and on the rocks. She had now reached the part always covered at high tide, and consequently clothed partially with seaweed, which made the rocks slippery. This was all the more fun to Grace, and she went on with light elastic tread, examining the treasures in each pool. Here the timid limpets were floating in the water, but ready in a moment to attach themselves to the rock with a firmness no hand could remove; there the

inhabitants of wee yellow, brown, and green shells were venturing to creep forth, but on any approach of danger retreating to their tiny snail-like mansions, and clinging fast to the sides of the pool. In one hollow some soldier crabs were seeking new dwellings among some empty shells, and being very hard to please, fitted themselves in and walked out again many times before they were satisfied. Grace was delighted to watch these tiny crabs, which unprovided by nature with a habitation, have to find one in the deserted shells of other fish, and sometimes if they take a fancy to a shell still tenanted, they will act the part of house-breakers indeed by ejecting and devouring as well the real owner to make it their own.

Quite engaged in her discoveries and busied with her new playmates, Grace did not notice that the rocks were more thickly covered as she went on, and more slippery. All at once, as she was springing on, her foot missed its hold, and she plunged into one of the pools. She was not hurt, the warm sea water was pleasant, and as Muffie came up to see what was the matter, Grace laughed aloud. Oh, what fun to paddle about in the water a little. She got out, took off her shoes and socks, and put them to dry on a rock more bare than the rest, and then with firmer footing walked over the rocks, and played in the pools, and enjoyed herself to her heart's content.

Of time Grace took no heed, and quite forgot that she had been desired by her mother to

return to her before two hours were gone. At last, rather tired of her sport, she went to look for her shoes, but alas, they had disappeared. There was no one on the ledge but herself, no one could have taken them, but they were not to be seen.

"Muffie, Muffie," she called, "come and find my shoes before the sea anemones eat them."

She held out her little white naked feet to show the dog what she wanted, but unfortunately Muffie was not a born retriever, and he took it all for play, and barked and frisked till Grace laughed and danced to bear him company. Then she began to look again after her lost shoes, and at last perceived that she had been for some time retreating before the advancing tide, which now covered the rocks on which she had been at play when she took them off.

"Oh, what will mamma say," she exclaimed, "at my leaving my shoes to the fishes; and how shall I walk home barefooted?"

She found that she must leave the rocks, for the sea was rising, and would soon cover the nearer ones, besides, Grace knew it must now be getting time for her to be at home.

When she reached the sands she stood still, looked at her bare, white feet, and the idea of walking home shoeless and sockless struck her, in spite of her annoyance, as so ridiculous that she broke into a peal of laughter, which appeared to delight Muffie immensely, for

he fawned on her, and whined in the most absurd way.

Under the shade of two rocks which met at their tops so as to form a rude archway, a lady and two girls were sitting, who had, while amusing themselves with their books, also observed Grace, as she came back to the beach, and wondered what she could be looking for so earnestly. The cause was soon apparent as Grace, in beginning her walk home, approached them, for her bare feet were plainly seen.

"Oh, look, auntie," said the younger girl, "she has no shoes or stockings on, she must have lost them."

At this remark the elder, a pale, delicate child nearly two years older than Grace, raised herself from her reclining posture, and pitying the little naked feet, asked if she might not lend the little girl her galoshes.

"We will go and ask her if she has lost her shoes," said their aunt, "and then, Lucy, if you like I think your galoshes might be useful."

Grace blushed with shame on seeing that a lady was coming up to her, but she felt reassured on perceiving that it was Miss Chertsey, a young lady who lived with some of her cousins as governess, and who had been very kind to her on her last visit. Miss Chertsey recognised her also, and came up quickly as soon as she found who the little bare-footed girl was. She shook hands with her, and after asking how her parents were, she introduced her two nieces Lucy and Annie Savile, and said, "We thought

you had lost your shoes, and were going to ask if a pair of galoshes would be of use to you."

Grace blushed and looked down, but could not help smiling as she confessed that she had allowed her shoes and socks to be washed into the sea, and very gladly accepted the offered galoshes. They were too large for her however, and she felt so awkward in her attempts to walk in them, that Miss Chertsey proposed going home with her to prevent her meeting with any more adventures. Lucy was kept on the dry part of the sands, and Grace went along soberly enough now, for it required some skill to keep the over-shoes on, and she was ashamed that her quiet lady-like companions should see her such a giddy girl.

As they reached the garden gate of the house Mrs. Alford was living in, the church clock struck two, and Grace was much vexed to think that she was a whole hour after her mother's dinner-time. Mrs. Alford came out to meet Miss Chertsey as soon as she saw who was with Grace, and the story of the meeting was quickly explained. Lucy was made to sit down and rest, though her shyness would scarcely allow her to do so, and Annie, a merry child, quite the reverse of her sister, made great friends with Muffie; while Mrs. Alford inquired after their mother, the widow of an officer who had died young, leaving her with three children, of whom the eldest was a son now past seventeen. The visit was not a long one, for it was the din-

ner hour at Rose Cottage, Mrs. Savile's lodging, and Lucy was invalid enough to make punctuality an essential to her. Miss Chertsey was to return to her pupils in a day or two, but Mrs. Alford promised to call on her sister, and said she should be glad of finding companions for Grace. Her sweet voice and gentle face were very winning, even to the shy Lucy, and perhaps the odd introduction to Grace made her feel not as timid as she usually did with strangers. Many thanks were offered for the help given to Muffie's mistress, in which the dog joined by very eloquently wagging his tail, while Grace blushed. As soon as the visitors were gone she was sent to make herself neat, for not only was she barefoot, but her pretty pink print frock was wet and stained with sea-weed and sand, and her hair blown into a wild cluster of curls. Mrs. Alford did not mind all this, she knew that if Grace played on the beach she could hardly help getting wet, nor was much said about the loss of shoes and socks, for the child was sorry for her carelessness, and had been put to enough inconvenience to make her try and take more heed to her things another time. So soon as she had had her dinner, Grace sat down very happily by her mother, and while getting through her daily task of work, amused her by her lively account of her morning's adventures, and of her discoveries among the tenants of the rocks.

"Are not you going out, mamma, dear?" she said, later in the afternoon, "you have not been



out all day, and it is such a lovely day. Do let us go to the shore and sit under the rocks."

"I cannot leave the house now, Gracey," replied Mrs. Alford, "Emma and Eliza are both out, so we must stay and take care of the cottage."

"How tiresome," exclaimed Grace, "why must they have gone out now?"

"Ought not they to have some pleasure too, love, this fine weather?" said her mother, "you know I promised them that they should go out to the Warren with old Ben to-day. That was the reason I wished you to come home at twelve, for we might have dined earlier than usual, and then I could have gone out before they left home."

"I forgot all about that," replied Grace, "it is very tiresome though, that you should have to stay in doors because they wanted to see the Warren."

"We must do things we do not like, dear child, to enable us to give others pleasure," replied her mother. "This is a very little thing, but if you had done as I wished, you would have saved me even from the necessity of spending to-day in doors. I do not want to make you unhappy after all your pleasure, love, but you will try to think, I hope, more about other people and their happiness than of your own enjoyments."

"You are always thinking of papa, or the servants or somebody," said Grace, "when I am a woman I suppose I shall think of my hus-

band and my friends, and always be doing something for them."

Mrs. Alford smiled. "You think, Gracey, perhaps, that childish ways will drop off with short frocks and pinafores, and that you can become a good unselfish woman when you put on a woman's dress; but, my dear child, that will not do. You must grow by degrees into good kind feelings and ways, just as you will grow, I hope, to a proper size and height. I mean by every day gaining more of them."

"But I can't do things for people as you can, and men and women can," said Grace.

"It is not doing things, as you call it, darling, that I mean," said her mother, "but thinking of others so as to avoid giving them pain, and pleasing them and making them happy. And chiefly perhaps feeling kindly to them, and wishing them to be happy, whether you can help them to be so or not. If you are not selfish, and love every one about you, Grace, you will go a long way to keep pain from both yourself and others."

"Nurse used often to tell me not to be selfish," said Grace, "and she made me learn about the selfish snails, but I think too she always liked her own way, and made herself of most importance. I could see that very plainly."

"It is difficult for a child to judge truly of a grown person," said Mrs. Alford, "but if you wish to be amiable and good, which a selfish person never is, you must try to think as little

about yourself as possible, and to care for the good, and the happiness of all round you. But if you like, as we cannot go to the shore, I will read you a little story written by a friend of mine on the very subject we have been talking of."

"O thank you, mother dear, but were not you wanting to write to papa, or read now?"

"It will please me to give my little girl pleasure," replied Mrs. Alford with her sweet smile, and she went to her desk and took out the following tale.

### THE TRIUMPHS OF SELFISHNESS.

It was at the close of the day, being indeed nearly nine at night, when in the porch of an old mansion about which a lawsuit had gone on for twenty years between two cousins, Selfishness in a female form stood to review the work of the day. Very dark and gloomy was her countenance, in which nevertheless a malicious triumph appeared, her robes were ample and enfolded her whole form, but she still seemed trying to wrap them closer round her, and to seek for more covering. A grim smile came over her face as she looked up at the old house now decaying, "Yes," she exclaimed, "this is a piece of *my* work. I have long reigned in the heart of Malthus Maltravers and his cousin, and a glorious family quarrel has been the consequence. For near twenty years they have not spoken, and while wishing each to get the estate, they have become poorer and poorer, and oh what

misery has prevailed in their families. Poor Alice Maltravers the sister, most people pitied her! I had no hold on her, but I crushed her. Yes, this is worthy of me. But I must recount what I have done to-day, some sport I have had, though not equal to this. I will first see what I have done among the young people.

"I began early, it does not do to lose any opportunities, little and often perhaps serve me best. I went into a large family whom I know well. Some of them I have little trouble with, they are mine, and very seldom take the pains to resist me. While dressing, the eldest son had arranged his day as suited him best, and decided on what he should do, quite regardless of the rest of the family. At breakfast the plans of the party were talked over. The eldest sister wished to drive to an archery fête and wanted her brother to take care of her. He declined and said he preferred his own sport, to which resolution I was careful to keep him. The sister would not give up hers, and begged her next brother and sister to accompany her. I whispered to them to think if it really would amuse them to do so, and they fancied it would not, so both excused themselves. The weather was too hot, the drive was long and there were other engagements. But the young lady was bent on her amusement, so after a good deal of reproach and vexation, it was decided by an aunt, over whom I could not gain any influence, giving up some business of her own to go with her niece. I had made the whole party uncom-

fortable, so I went next to the schoolroom. My work there was as successful. The governess pushed on her pupils in lessons which would make a show, and gain her credit, neglecting the more important matters. Each child tried for most praise, most reward, and the best of everything for itself. How I laughed as I saw one securing the coolest seat, the most convenient desk, another vexed and pouting because she had to wait till her companion's lesson was said, and another working hard only that she might be called the cleverest.

"I ascended to the nursery, there Miss Lizzy was crying because Master Robert would not let her have a ride on the rocking-horse, and teased her nurse incessantly to punish him, refusing dolls and toys and every attempt to amuse her. In another corner Master Harry was sulking because he had taken by force from his little sister Anne a piece of cake he liked better than his own, while as I turned round I saw that Miss Louisa was playing with her brother's toys, and keeping her own very carefully put away that they might not be spoiled. All was going on as I wished, for though I heard the nurse scold the children very often for being so selfish and cross, I saw she was thinking only of the trouble they gave her, and not taking any pains to make them really kind to each other.

"I next went to another house where, though I find sometimes a good deal of dislike shown me, I can generally get my own way. A widow

lady lived here with three daughters and two little boys. She had tried hard to keep me away, by making her children help one another and give up to one another, but I found I could often defeat her efforts. At first sight a stranger would have scarcely perceived me, for there were no loud voices, nor angry tones. Miss Catherine was waiting most carefully on her mother, who was not well, seeing quickly everything she wanted and eager to help her. I knew she liked being of importance, and had kept her sister Helen from doing anything, which in spite of an indolent temper she willingly would have done for her mother. Helen looked a little cast down, but consoled herself by her favourite amusement a story book, not choosing to notice her elder sister Ethel's request that she would prepare Edward for school. Ethel had to do it herself, and then called Harry to say his lessons. Harry was a good child, but not quick at learning, and Ethel had often been advised to give him one hour in the morning, and another in the afternoon. This did not suit her own employments, and though she attended to him with great care, the too long time given to his lessons at once, generally wearied him and made him fractious. Ethel would hardly have allowed that she was acquainted with me, and I confess she kept me often at a distance, but much more frequently than she would have allowed I led her as I chose, and Harry's lessons were one thing I spoiled.

"This was all my every-day work, but my

chief sport to-day has been turning all the pleasures prepared for little Rose Avenal's birthday into vexation and pain. I have been much of late with the little girl, and I had made her look forward to her birthday and the presents and amusements prepared for her and think a great deal of herself. This morning I was with her as soon as she woke," continued Selfishness, "and I made her scold her nurse because she was not to put on the dress she thought she looked best in. Then she wanted every one to attend to her, and was so cross when her elder sisters went to their occupations as usual, that the morning of her birthday was spent in fretting and impatience. The gifts she received were very pretty, but not quite what she fancied, and she had expected more, so she was disappointed in them.

"In the afternoon her little friends came, and her sisters were ready to help in amusing them, but I made her think that she was the only person to be regarded, and that everything was to be done as she fancied. She did not always know her own mind and sometimes she wanted games that did not suit the rest, so her temper spoilt their fun. At tea she was to be first helped and to have all she liked, for I kept close to her, and then I whispered to the other children that they had a right to more attention than was given them, so all were dissatisfied.

"After tea some fireworks were to be shown, and Rose was so eager about them that she looked happy again, but I did not leave her,

and she pressed eagerly forward to get the first place. 'Take care, Rose, not so near,' said her father, but in her eagerness she did not hear, and in trying to push before another girl her foot tripped and she fell forward, her light muslin frock catching fire at a torch. She was not much burnt, but very much frightened, and was obliged to be taken in, and put to bed. I had quite spoilt all her pleasure and I heard her mother accusing me of doing so as she came to see her just now.

"A fair day's work for me indeed!" and Selfishness smiled grimly, and shook her dark robes in the old decayed porch.

"Is that all, dear mamma?" said Grace. "O thank you. I hope I shall be able to keep that ugly Selfishness from leading me. I don't think she even knows you."

"Then let love always be in your heart, my child, and that sweet spirit will keep the evil Selfishness away. But here are Eliza and Emma come to bring us tea, you must put away your work."

Grace jumped up, not sorry to put away her work now the story was done, and skipping into the garden, she and Muftie had a good game while Mrs. Alford made tea.



## CHAPTER II.

“ Oh, let us often seek in thought  
That cottage house in Galilee,  
And by this blest example learn  
What Christian children ought to be.”

GRACE was the only child of Colonel Alford and his wife, she had been born in India, and lived there with her parents for eight years. Since that time Colonel Alford had been in England, and with his wife and child resided close to a large barrack town. He had at the time our story begins, just received orders to prepare to go out to India, and his first step was to settle Grace and her mother in a pretty cottage at Exmouth, for he could not then take them with him. Three days after Grace's adventure on the rocks he came to spend the last few days he could command with his family before leaving England.

“ Oh, papa,” said Grace, as she was walking with him alone, “ I am so glad you are come ; to-morrow is my birthday, and I do not like a birthday without you at all. I shall have no lessons to do, and I can please myself all day ; I shall be my own mistress then.”

Colonel Alford smiled, and replied, “ Do you remember, Grace, the answer that a king of France made to the man who told him that he was his own master ? ”

Grace answered laughing, and hugging her

father's hand, "Oh, papa, that is too bad. He said he had a fool for his master. But you do not mean that quite for me?"

"No, Gracey; but, perhaps, if you only thought of amusing and pleasing yourself all day you might possibly resemble him. However, to prevent such a risk suppose we plan something to give mamma pleasure on your birthday. Can you think of anything she would like to see or to do now? only don't be too grand in your plans."

Grace thought a few minutes, and exclaimed, "Could you take her to Powderham Castle, papa? I know she would like that, for she said the other day she should so much like to see the gardens there."

"Well, I really think that might be done," replied her father, "it is a good thought, Grace, and now the weather is so fine she will enjoy it."

"And, papa," said Grace with a little hesitation, as if she was asking a favour, "do you think you could take Lucy Savile? She is so weak that she cannot walk, and Mrs. Savile said yesterday, when we went to see her, that she could only go out and sit on the shore a little. Once they had a carriage when Major Savile was alive, but they are so poor now they cannot even hire one. I will stay at home, for I can run and walk as I like, but poor Lucy cannot."

"There will be room for two little girls," replied her father, "but perhaps Mrs. Savile

will not like to trust her delicate little girl away from herself. We will go and call on her now, however, and ask."

Mrs. Savile was much pleased to have a visit from Colonel Alford who had known her husband well, and in whose regiment her own son Edgar was as ensign. So much had she and her visitor to say to each other about former times when she was a happy wife, and about Edgar's prospects, that Grace feared the object of the visit would be forgotten. At last the girls were mentioned, and Colonel Alford begged to be allowed to take charge of Lucy for the expedition, which would not be a long one.

Grace often said that no one could refuse her father, and Mrs. Savile proved no exception. She was pleased at the change for her gentle, patient Lucy, and gladly accepted the offer.

As Grace and her father rose to go, Edgar Savile came in with his sisters, and saluted his officer in right military style.

Grace could not help blushing as she wondered whether his sisters had told him of their first meeting with her, but he spoke very kindly she thought, and indeed during the few minutes they were together he talked entirely to her.

Edgar was a fine youth, manly and open in countenance, and the consciousness of being the only support of his widowed mother had made him thoughtful and steady beyond his years. The near parting with his mother, to whom he was most tenderly attached, made him just

now graver than usual, but there was so much kindness and courtesy in his tone and manner, both to her and his sisters, that Grace was quite at ease with him, and thought him a very fine officer, an opinion she favoured her father with when they began their walk home.

"Yes, Grace," said Colonel Alford, "I do think that if Edgar Savile is spared he will make a very fine officer; he is one of the most right-principled and high-minded young men I know, and very unselfish. Ever since his father's death he has tried in every way to be a comfort to his mother, and his care for his sisters is more like a father's than a brother's. Well, now we have Lucy under our care to-morrow as you wished, and I shall consider her your especial charge. She will not be much of a playmate for you, and you must try and make her happy in her own way, which will be to let her get as little tired and be as quiet as possible. We have asked her, you know, Gracey, to do her good, and give her pleasure."

"Yes, papa, I know," replied Grace, "and I will not want her to run about and do what I like; I will try to let her enjoy herself as she likes."

"Quite right," he replied, "many people spoil the pleasure of others by wanting them to be happy in their way, instead of forgetting themselves and enjoying the happiness of their friends. Now you and I will have a run on the beach before we go in."

Grace enjoyed her game with her father ex-

ceedingly, and even the nearness of his departure did not rob that evening of its pleasure to her, though it made her mother's cheek pale.

The next morning was as lovely as any little maiden could have wished for her birthday, and Grace's voice was heard early carolling like the birds who were enjoying the dewy freshness. Before breakfast her father called her into the little drawing-room, and wishing her many happy returns of the day, he fondly kissed and blessed his only child. Grace stood beside him encircled with his arm, and not excited or in high spirits now, for she had been thinking that it was a serious thing to begin another year, and while she sought the blessing of her Heavenly FATHER she had prayed to be made better, and to be more of a comfort to her parents than before.

There were several presents from various friends which Colonel Alford had to give Grace with kind messages, and he had brought her some books, but putting these aside to be looked at afterwards, he opened a picture-case, and showed her a beautiful print of our SAVIOUR in early youth, with Joseph in his carpenter's work-shop, and Mary engaged in some household occupation. At the bottom of the print were placed in simple illuminated letters the words, "For even CHRIST pleased not Himself," and, "He was subject unto them." The Holy Child was represented as carrying to His reputed father two pieces of wood on His shoul-

ders, and as the shadow fell before Him on the ground it formed the resemblance of a cross.

"Do you understand the meaning of this picture, Grace?" asked her father.

"It is meant for our LORD at Nazareth, I suppose," she replied, "but I want you to tell me about it."

"It is intended as an illustration of S. Luke's short account of His youth," said Colonel Alford, "He is represented, you see, as helping Joseph in his trade; but I chose this, Grace, as my present to you before leaving England that it might remind you of some lessons I want you to keep in mind. That shadow of a cross is meant to show that from His earliest years the whole of our LORD's life was one of suffering for our sakes, and that His daily obedience and submission were part of His great work of Redemption. Again, 'He pleased not Himself,' and we must remember, my child, that we are to follow His example, not trying to do all we should like, but submitting to what is ordered for us, and thinking of the good of others before our own pleasure. His subjection to His parents too is our example, and needs perhaps more than in other times to be now enforced. Whenever you feel inclined, Grace, to think yourself wiser than your elders, or to resist their advice, remember our SAVIOUR's example, He Who was Wisdom itself, and Who as the SON of GOD was far above His earthly mother, yet was subject to her and His guardian Joseph."

Grace threw her arms round her father, and exclaimed, "Oh, papa, I shall never be wiser than you, and I love you so much I shall never want to do what you do not like."

"I know you do love me very much, my pet," he replied, "but there are others you may have to submit to, and if ever you should find right obedience hard look at those words, and remember Whom you are to follow. And now tell me, if you had seen this print anywhere with no texts about it, should you have taken it for a picture of a common carpenter's shop?"

"Oh, no, papa, the faces are so sweet, and look so holy."

"Then let that remind you that love and obedience raise our common earthly tasks, and as it were bring heavenly light on everything. As Christians, Grace, that holy calm, that heavenly sweetness ought to be ours in all our common work and daily pleasures or pains. Take this print, and look at it often, love, and may your childhood be like His."

Grace clung closely to her father, and her warm clasp spoke what she could not say in words, the answer to his prayer.

It was a happy day for all, and Mrs. Alford overcoming her sadness at the near parting, tried by her own cheerfulness to make her husband and child glad. She was able to enjoy the pleasant expedition to Powderham Castle by water, and quite satisfied Grace by entering into the pleasure her husband and daughter had planned for her.

Grace did not forget her father's advice, to allow Lucy to be quiet if she chose it, and both on the water and when they reached the grounds she moderated her own spirits so as not to tire her companion. Lucy could walk but little, so as soon as a shady spot in the gardens had been reached, some cushions were spread for her, and she was left to enjoy the view and the fresh air, while the others walked on. One of the gardeners took a great fancy to Grace, and led her all over the grounds, giving her flowers, and seeming to delight in her lively talk and activity, so that she enjoyed herself fully, while her father and mother talked over the many things they had to say together.

Lucy liked the quiet rest and the fresh air, and when she returned with the flowers Grace insisted on giving her, to her mother, she spoke with sparkling eyes of the great pleasure she had had, the enjoyment of being rowed over the calm sea, and sitting in the lovely gardens. Grace had the pleasure of hearing Mrs. Savile say that her child had seldom had any treat which did her so much good.

But in two days, which flew very quickly by, Colonel Alford had to leave, and bid farewell for perhaps some years to the treasures of his home. Such partings are well known in all their sorrow, and need no description.

When her father was gone Grace ran away to her own room to have a long cry, but she thought of his charge to her to comfort her



mother, and watch her, and make her happy, so after weeping some time because she could not help it, she went down to caress and cheer her.

Mrs. Alford's chief comfort was the hope that in a few years she might rejoin her husband, and bring to him their only child such as he would wish to see her, and to her education she devoted herself.

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### CHAPTER III.

" The trivial round, the common task  
Would furnish all we ought to ask,  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us daily nearer God."

IT was a chilly autumn day, about a year and a half after Colonel Alford's departure, when Grace and her mother were sitting together in their drawing-room. Grace was endeavouring to get a correct likeness of Muffie, and had already drawn a tolerable portrait of him as he lay asleep, but she next wanted to take him sitting up and looking at her, which was not so easy. Each time she fixed her eye on him to get the right position of his head he seemed to think he ought to acknowledge the attention, for he got up, wagged his tail, shook his ears, and then licked her hand or dress.

"Down, Muffie, be quiet; how can I draw

you, sir?" had little effect, it was plain, Muffie did not know how to sit for his portrait, and at last, thinking the pencil, and paper, and drawing-board very strange, he stood opposite to Grace, and barked at them. He made such a ludicrous figure as he did so that she went into a fit of laughter, and ended by taking him by the fore-paws, and dancing with him. Mrs. Alford was writing, so the dance did not long continue, as Grace thought it might interrupt her mother, but the portrait could not be continued now, so she took up a book and drew near the fire to amuse herself.

In a little while Mrs. Alford put by her desk, and looking at the time-piece, said, "Now, Grace, I am ready, and we must go out."

"Oh, mamma, it is so cold and dull; must we go out?" cried she.

"It is rather chilly," replied her mother, "but it is not even raining, and there is nothing to hurt you in such weather as this. I am going to Shrimp Lane, and I will take you to the Alma-houses. Old Mrs. Tweed and Mrs. Oldridge will be looking for you."

"It is very tiresome to have to go out now," said Grace, "just as I was going to read. Will it signify much if I do not go to-day?"

"I do not oblige you to go, Grace," replied her mother, "but I thought when you promised Mr. Haverstock to read to the old women you did so for their benefit, and not only for your own pleasure."

"Yes, mamma, but to-day I had much rather not go, it is so dull and cold."

"Well, my dear, I must go at once, and so I will leave you to think whether you will please yourself, or do what will be a pleasure to your old friends. They must find such a day dull, and want a little cheering."

Mrs. Alford went to put on her bonnet, and Grace opened her book again. In the drawing-room all was so cosy, the fire bright, her book amusing, Muffie ready to play if she wanted him, and out of doors it looked so disagreeable. She would stay, and go another day to the almshouses. But her mother's last words though not spoken as blaming her, brought to her mind others which struck her forcibly. "Please yourself," but CHRIST pleased not Himself. What would her father think if he could see his little girl so selfish? Grace could not read in peace after that. She got up, and went up to her room to see if it was such very bad weather, but the thought of her father made her turn to her picture instead of the window.

There was no self-pleasing in that meek Child waiting on His earthly guardian, and bearing far from His glorious home the burden of sorrow and pain. Grace felt ashamed of her selfishness. How could she be following that example if she indulged her idleness, and amused herself instead of doing the little she could to help others? She uttered one short prayer for pardon and help, and quickly dressed herself. Her mother was waiting for her and they started.

The weather was better than it had seemed to be in doors, and the fresh sea-breeze soon made Grace feel brisk, and glad she had come out.

They walked along the Parade which looked over the sea, and as they passed a bookseller's shop at the end, Grace begged her mother to stop a minute at the window. "There, mamma, I want you to look a minute. Is not that a beautiful book? I am going to buy it for Lucy."

"It is very pretty, and the prints are good," replied Mrs. Alford, "as far as I can see. But surely, Grace, it is beyond your means."

"It is worth fourteen shillings, mamma, but I want to give Lucy something, and she will like that so much, she is so fond of books that are illustrated."

"We will walk on now," said her mother, "but you cannot have nearly money enough, my dear, I think."

"I have got some of my last allowance left, and I shall have the next very soon, and if I save it all, I shall soon have enough for that."

"But I thought you were going to get some tea for old Mrs. Tweed, and in a very short time you will have to buy another pair of gloves. Though you have mended those you have on very carefully, they will not last much longer."

"I daresay the bookseller will wait a little, mamma, for the money, and I need not give Mrs. Tweed the tea, for I did not promise her any. I should so like to surprise Lucy."

"Now, Grace, I want you to think a little

more about this before you decide," said Mrs. Alford, "you wish to please Lucy?"

"Yes, certainly."

"But you must not be unjust to any one else; now buying what you cannot pay for is not right, and though you think you can save the money, I believe you seldom have much to lay by. Papa would not like you to wear no gloves or be untidy, and then you will be sorry to have nothing to help any poor person with, and there is your school payment for Susy Green. Would it be right to think only of the pleasure of giving an expensive book to Lucy?"

Grace looked disappointed, and her mother continued, "Now if you wish to make Lucy a present, you could give her something I have often thought she would be glad of and which will cost but little money. She has not a warm vest like the one I knitted for you, and you could easily make her one. She would value it more than anything you could buy, as your work, and then you would run no risk of being unfair to any one. People are selfish even in their generosity sometimes, and give up a duty for the sake of doing something which seems grand and generous, and I should be sorry, Grace, that you learnt to do this."

Grace was disappointed, but she had been accustomed to respect her mother's judgment and said nothing. They had reached the almshouses, and Mrs. Alford left her there while she went to Shrimp Lane.

Though Grace had not felt inclined to go out on this day, she usually was fond of visiting the old women to whom the clergyman had asked her to read, and her visits were welcome to them, for in their age and infirmity she cheered them, and made a change in their quiet suffering life.

It was not much that a child could do to help the poor, but Mrs. Alford taught Grace to care for them, and to be glad when she could render any service especially to the aged, and she allowed her to pay for the schooling of Susy Green the grandchild of Mrs. Oldridge.

When Grace went into Mrs. Tweed's room she found both the old women together, and heard that Mrs. Tweed was poorly with headache and cold, so her neighbour had come to nurse her.

"You should have a cup of hot tea," said Grace, "that would do your head good."

"I have just made her some," replied Mrs. Oldridge, "but till I brought her in my teapot, she had nothing but toast and water."

"My money is very little," said Mrs. Tweed, "and tea is very dear. But we won't hinder miss, she'll read a bit now."

Grace felt very glad that the book had not been bought, and that she had money to buy some tea. She said nothing however about it, and began the reading. When she had finished and they had talked a little over it, and Mrs. Oldridge had inquired how Susy got on at school, Grace went to another room to read to

an old man nearly blind. He had been a soldier when young, and often kept her some time after she had read to him to ask after her father, and tell her stories of his own wanderings and perils. Here Mrs. Alford found her when she returned from her own harder labours among the ignorant and poor inhabitants of Shrimp Lane, and they left the almshouses to return home.

"Is it too late just to get a little tea now, mamma, for the old women," said Grace, "Mrs. Tweed has such a bad headache, and she has no money just now to buy any for herself. You know she only gets half-a-crown a week."

"It is rather too late now, Gracey, for it will be dark almost before we get home, but you shall get it to-morrow morning if you like."

"And mamma, I see you were quite right about the book. It would not have been fair to spend all my money on that, and to have had none to help the poor with. I will make Lucy a warm vest like mine."

"I am glad you have so decided, Gracey," replied her mother kindly, "for after all in giving the book you would have had but a rather selfish pleasure. I hope you will always think of what is fair and just, as well as kind. We can lend Lucy some of our books, which will please her more than if she thought you had spent all your money on her."

Grace found that her present to Lucy required more self-denial than laying out money would have done. She did not like work, and if she

meant the vest to be of real use she must finish it before the severe weather set in. It was a daily lesson in unselfishness, for of course she had to do it at times when she would otherwise have been reading or drawing, occupations she much preferred. However, she persevered in doing a good piece of it every day, and when inclined to excuse herself from this task, or to leave it off before she had done as much as she ought, she encouraged herself by thinking of the words her father had written for her, "CHRIST pleased not Himself."

It was but a trifle, some may say, but as has been often remarked, our life is made up of trifles, and we have the words of Divine Wisdom assuring us, "that he who is faithful in the least is faithful also in much." By such little things was Grace trained day by day under her mother's loving care, and by her example. Her quick impetuous moods were restrained, her love called forth, and she was taught to check selfishness and self-will.

The vest was finished before any severe cold came, and had it been a greater trouble to Grace than it was, she would have felt overpaid by the sincere pleasure both Lucy and Mrs. Savile expressed in it.

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## CHAPTER IV.

"Charity is not easily provoked."—1 Cor. xiii.

A GREAT trial was at hand for Grace ere her twelfth birthday came. Hitherto the accounts from her father had been generally good, but in the spring he wrote speaking of some ill-health, and soon after Mrs. Alford received a letter from an old friend, saying, that though Colonel Alford had not himself asked it, he was sure that he would be much better for the coming of his wife to be with him. Mrs. Alford instantly wrote begging her husband to arrange for her to join him, and soon received an answer showing that though he had not liked to propose her leaving Grace, he was really glad to have her come to him. He hoped the separation from their child would not be a very long one, but she must at present remain in England, under the care of his brother-in-law, Mr. Stopford.

This news was a heavy blow to Grace, who had never for one day been parted from her mother, and she knew very little of her uncle and aunt or her cousins. It was a greater grief than the parting from her father, for then she had her mother, who strove to be to her doubly loving and careful, but now she was to live with those who were comparatively as strangers to her. It is no wonder that though she tried not to increase her mother's pain by fretting and

complaining, she yet cried bitterly over the parting at night. Mrs. Alford had many a heartache at the thought of leaving her child, but it was plainly her duty to go to her husband, and she trusted Grace to the protection of her Heavenly FATHER, earnestly praying for her that she might be especially guided and preserved now she was for a time left without the care of her earthly parents.

Mrs. Savile would willingly have had Grace under her care, but Colonel Alford thought it better to place her with his sister, and so Grace was obliged to bid adieu to her early friends, who begged however that she might be allowed now and then to visit them. Taking leave of Lucy and Annie and their mother, was a sad task to Grace, but this parting was almost forgotten in the heavier sorrow of the separation from her own mother. Very heavy-hearted was she when she was brought to her uncle's house to begin her new life in a large family, where it would be very different from the old quiet time spent in the cottage at Exmouth.

Her uncle and aunt received her very kindly, and her cousins seemed pleased at her coming, but the chief comfort Grace found that first evening, was in a chat with Miss Chertsey, over her dear friends Lucy and Annie, of whom their aunt was as glad to hear as Grace to talk. The next day she joined her cousins in the school-room, and got better acquainted with them. The two older girls, Ella and Netta, were three and four years older than herself and much disposed to pe'

her. Ella was quiet and thoughtful, slow in her ways, and particularly clever in needlework, which she did beautifully and was very fond of. Netta took care of her things, managed for her, ruled her, and being quick and active did all those little home duties which devolved on the eldest daughter, while Ella took her share of whatever required patient skill, and involved sitting at work. The two girls were inseparable and the one seemed incomplete without the other. After them came a brother rather older than Grace, and then two other girls of eight or nine, Blanche and Rose. Blanche was talented with great aptitude for learning, which none of her sisters had, but very gentle and meek ; while Rose was quick, clever in some ways, and impetuous. Miss Chertsey found her new pupil well taught, and quite forward enough for her age, with a decided love of learning, which would make instructing her an easy task. Had Blanche been within a year of Grace in age, the two would have gone on well together, but as it was Grace was obliged to be alone in many things. To her, the presence of others, and the restraint of the school-room was a great trial. She found it difficult to command her attention to her own work, while music, reading or repeating were going on, and she could not now run into the garden, or romp with Mufftie for five minutes, to clear her head, as she said, between her lessons.

Her mother had, however, warned her of this difficulty, and Miss Chertsey was very patient,

so that after the first week she began to get on, and not to sit listening to her cousins' lessons leaving her own to be done after school-hours. The constant society of her cousins, much as she liked having companions in her leisure time, was not without its trials also, and she found the truth of her mother's remark, that there would be continual need of self-denial in her intercourse with them. Hitherto she had had no one to conform to, or give way to in her own little plans and amusements, and when Lucy and Annie were with her, the gentle patient temper of the elder, and the bright contented spirit of the latter, never allowed any disagreement to mar their pleasure. Besides Grace always felt such pity for Lucy's ill-health, and such admiration of her goodness, that she set herself to try in every way to give her pleasure, and Lucy loved her dearly and was very grateful, while Annie was perfectly happy to see her sister pleased, and to share Grace's plans. But now our little heroine could not be first with anybody, and found that though her cousins liked to have her, and were kind to her, she must come into their ways and their plans. The training in unselfishness, however, had not been lost, and Grace did try to forget herself, and to endeavour to make her companions happy.

Each morning when she was dressed, she looked at her picture, and recalled her father's advice and her mother's teaching, and remembered Whose example she must strive to follow. She knew now what her father had meant when

he told her that she might have to obey other guardians beside her parents, and often when on her first coming to her uncle's, she felt fretted at some rule or some arrangement she was not used to, the words, "He was subject to them" came to her mind, and helped her to obey willingly.

Rose soon became a great pet of Grace's, for she was active and liked a good game of play, and the two with Muffie sometimes made more noise in the nursery when they could have it to themselves, than had been heard there for a long time, or than would have been permitted in any other part of the house. Grace was getting too old to romp, Ella said sometimes, and Netta and Blanche wondered that she cared for such thorough play, but Miss Chertsey remembered the scene of the lost shoes, and felt that after the freedom of the sea-shore, she needed something different from the quiet walk in Kensington Gardens, which formed their daily exercise. Rose was very fond of her cousin, who was to her quite a great girl, and though wilful at times she allowed Grace to rule her and control her more than any one else, and Grace was pleased to be her favourite.

About two months after Grace's arrival came Rose's birthday, and Grace planned to make it a very happy day for her cousin. It was to be nearly a holyday, and from eleven o'clock in the morning, when lessons were over, the two were together with Blanche, and the time passed very pleasantly, Grace inventing amusements,

and the two little girls joining with her in thorough delight, and praising her cleverness. She felt happier in directing and contriving for them, than if others had been trying to amuse herself.

In the afternoon, some of the young acquaintance of the girls came to join them, strangers to Grace, and Ella and Netta took part in their amusements. Grace did not mind the elder girls proposing games, and being the leaders, but she was much disappointed that Rose seemed entirely taken up with a little friend rather older than Blanche, and did not care to have her as she usually did. She felt herself neglected, and instead of seeing this was very natural, and trying to think still of Rose's pleasure, she allowed herself to be vexed and look displeased. Her cousins took no notice of her in particular, being engaged with their friends, but after a time Miss Chertsey saw her looking tired as she thought, and advised her to go and rest a little. Ella heard the advice and said, "Oh, yes, Grace, you must be tired I am sure, do take a story-book, we don't want you just now."

It was meant kindly, but Grace did not take it so, she thought they all wanted to get rid of her, so with a cross feeling she left the room, and went to look for Muffie in the nursery, where he was often to be found. He was not there, nor was Brunton the nurse, so Grace stayed by herself watching the carriages passing below, and feeling disappointed. She was soon

summoned to tea, and found Rose seated, crowned with flowers between two of her friends looking very happy. Flowers decked the birthday cake, and the dishes of fruit, and Miss Chertsey while making tea was keeping up the gaiety of the merry party. While they were so engaged, a slight scuffle was heard in the passage, the door was opened, and Albert, now at home for his holidays, entered in a strange disguise, announcing the visit of the Grand Mufti to the queen of the day. He then brought forward Muffie dressed up oddly enough, and struggling with his finery, which he was endeavouring to get rid of. All laughed heartily at the dog's face appearing beneath a sort of turban, and his paws peeping out from his flowing robes, but Grace fancied from his whining and struggling that he was hurt, and rushed up to him.

"What made you meddle with my dog?" she cried to her cousin, and lifting Muffie, robes and all, up in her arms she carried him out of the room, to the astonishment of every one, especially of Albert, who had not an idea of rousing a passion in his lively cousin.

Grace bore the dog to her own room, where she speedily tore off his disguise, and then began to find out that she had been in a passion, and that her behaviour had been very bad. Muffie licked her hand and wagged his tail, but she was not disposed for play, and felt ashamed of herself. She soon acknowledged that Albert had not meant to hurt her dog, and that only her own ill-temper made her find fault with the

fun he had wished to make for his sister. Grace had been taught to be honest with herself, and she looked over her conduct and feelings during that day to see what had been the beginning of her being so put out. It was nothing but selfishness at last. She wanted to have Rose's chief notice and regard, to be of most importance to her, it was her own pleasure she had really been seeking. Grace was now sorry for this, as well as ashamed at the scene she had caused, and she thought too how grieved her mother would have been to see her passionate. She was interrupted by Miss Chertsey's coming to ask her if she would not come and finish her tea, for it was time to dress for going to the drawing-room.

Grace threw her arms round her kind governess, and said, "O, Miss Chertsey, I have been a very naughty girl, I am so sorry I was in a passion."

"Albert did not think you would mind your little dog being dressed up," replied Miss Chertsey, "he is so used to do as he likes with his sisters' things, that he forgot to ask leave."

"O no, he need not do that," said Grace, "I was cross and selfish, I am very sorry."

"It is a new thing for you to be among so many companions, my love, and that makes it hard for you sometimes to agree with them all, but you will try to be patient and bear with them better. You know, Grace, we must not think of ourselves and please ourselves."

The only answer was a hug and a sob, and



Miss Chertsey kissing her said she had better be quick and prepare for Brunton to dress her.

Grace did so, and the nurse soon came to assist her. While she was brushing her curls Grace looked at her picture, and wished she could always be as loving and gentle as He was, Who in meek childhood was there represented. When she was alone, she knelt to ask His forgiveness for her temper and selfishness, and grace to follow Him, and then at once took courage to go down and meet her cousins. She went to the schoolroom, as the bell had not yet rung for the young people to go down, and found only Albert reading there. As she entered he turned to see who it was and knocked his book off the table. Grace ran and picked it up for him, and as he thanked her in some surprise, she said, "I am so sorry I spoil your fun, Albert, I do not really mind your playing with Muffie."

Albert was rather astonished, he had not expected that Grace would make an apology, and he scarcely knew what to say. However, the quarrel was made up, and when the girls came in they found Albert relating to her the wonderful performances of a dog he had seen at school, belonging to one of the masters. When the bell rang he took her and made her bound down stairs with him, in a style only her light figure and nimble foot could have accomplished without noise. During the rest of the evening Grace kept in the background ready to do anything she was asked, but not wishing to be noticed.

## CHAPTER V.

“ Love as brethren—be pitiful—”

“ Whosoever shall give to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only . . . he shall not lose his reward.”

THIS little vexation was a hint to Grace to watch her own temper, and to keep away selfishness, and she did improve very much in real kindness and gentleness. She checked her own eager mind which would have made her wish to be first, and taught herself to submit to the advice and rule of her elders, and to be ready to help others without making herself of importance. In all this the constant letters of her parents were of great assistance to her, as well as the teaching and example of her governess.

One thing Grace had greatly missed since she had lived in London, the visits to the poor, which with her mother she had always been accustomed to make. Now, except the few beggars who met them in their walks, or the sweepers to whom they gave halfpence, she and her cousins seemed to have nothing to do with the poor.

One day as they were crossing from the church, Grace noticed that the place of the old man who usually swept that part was supplied by a boy, who in very ragged clothing, and with almost bare feet was doing his best to make a clean path. The child was perhaps a'

tracted by her notice, for he came up to her and gave her the information that he was going to keep on the crossing, for his grandfather was not able to do it. Grace drew the attention of the others to him, and it was discovered that the halfpence he collected were the main support of two little sisters, for their mother was dead, and their father constantly in the gin-shop. Grandfather had kept them, the boy said, for a long time, but he was ill now and had been taken to the union of his own parish which was in the country.

"And what will you do with your pence if we give you some?" said Miss Chertsey.

"Buy bread for Lizzy and Jemmy," said the boy.

"And where do you lodge at night?"

"O, where I can. We have a bit of a room and some straw, but it's so hot in there and the people make such a noise that I don't like it. I slept last week in the roller of the Park with another boy, and we were very jolly."

Grace uttered a little cry, at the idea of such poverty, and Miss Chertsey said, "Tell us your name, and if you will try to keep on the crossing, and be a good boy, we will help you a little."

"I'm called Daniel Beck," was the reply.

All the pence the young people had, were given to the boy, and with a grin of delight he pulled the front of his ragged cap and returned to his sweeping.

"To be obliged to sleep in a roller or on straw," exclaimed Grace, "how wretched."

"I fear many are in as bad a case," said her governess, "I dare say the boy felt the roller shared with one companion, a better couch than the hot crowded room, and it was certainly far better for him in this warm weather."

"O, I wish I was very rich," said Grace, "that I might build houses for the poor, and make them more comfortable."

"None of the present company are very rich," said Miss Chertsey, "and we cannot therefore do great things in the way of helping the poor, but here is a case which I think we can manage by some self-denial. Will each of you think what you can give or do towards helping this little fellow? I think we must try to make him feel as respectable as we can, that he may try to keep from bad ways, and feel he has a character to maintain. Now if he is clothed tidily he will feel lifted up from low want, and it will give him an idea of something better than rags and dirt. And then we will try to find a way of teaching him."

"Could not we put him to school?" asked Grace.

"Not by day, for he must earn his living, but on Sunday afternoons and in the evening he might go, and we will see about that. If we can get him a tidy suit for Sundays, he will not be ashamed to go among tidy children."

"And his sisters?" said Blanche.

"We will first do what we can for him," replied Miss Chertsey, "and if he tries to be

good and steady we will endeavour to help the little girls."

The work of clothing the little sweeper was soon begun. Netta and Ella made his shirts, Grace knitted his socks, and Blanche hemmed a couple of neckerchiefs for him. Mrs. Stopford found some clothes which Albert had outgrown, and which with a little alteration did very well for a Sunday suit. She also allowed him to come for his dinner on Sundays before going to school. Daniel was not ungrateful for the kindness shown him; and the hope held out to him that if he would do well, his sisters should be helped, was a great inducement to him to go to school and behave well. He was unable to read, and had never been taught anything except by his grandfather, who had tried to make him honest, and keep him from some of the evil which was around the child. At first he did not like going to school and learning, but he was old enough to understand that it would help him, and after a short time and great pains on Miss Chertsey's part to see that he was regular, he got over his dislike and began to improve. She took the trouble of speaking to the clergyman at the Sunday school, and to the teachers of Daniel's class both at that and the night school, and she looked over the tickets he received for attendance. Grace was quite as eager about his improvement and promised him a nice Prayer-book as soon as he could read the 5th Psalm. Great was her delight when one Sunday he came smiling up to her and said he

had read it all through to his teacher, and the gift of the promised book in red binding, did much to help him to good behaviour in church.

She was eager, however, to see his sisters, of whom he spoke with sorrow, for he could not support them well, and their father cared little to look after them. Their lodging was not in a part of the town where Mrs. Stopford could allow the young people to go, but she went with Miss Chertsey, and found that the little girls were indeed in a most miserable state. In a crowded room, ragged, dirty, half-starved, learning to lisp all manner of evil words, with no one to care for them but their brother who was out all day, the two children were indeed to be pitied. Mrs. Stopford saw at once that nothing could be done while they remained there, and she determined to try and find a better home for them.

"Poor little motherless things," she said to Miss Chertsey; "I wish there were some home we could send them to; but I will find some person in my district to take them in for the present."

She inquired for the father, and obtained his leave to remove the children, and by the help of the magistrate also gained a promise of part of his weekly earnings for them, and after a good deal of trouble, found a lodging for them and their brother in the room of an honest woman, whose husband was a sort of cobbler in the court she had charge of. In all this Grace and her

cousins had nothing to do ; but as soon as the little girls had been placed in their new home Mrs. Stopford told her children that she should consider them as responsible for Lizzy and Jemmy, since she had quite as much on her hands as she could manage in the poor she already looked after, and she wished them to have the privilege of denying themselves for the sake of the needy.

The girls set to work instantly to clothe the little ragged children, and as neither of them had much money, there was a good deal of contriving and making of new garments out of old ones. In this Ella's skill was very valuable, for though slow she was very exact, and would plan and turn and twist till she had arranged all in the best way. Grace was not clever at this, and Netta was too quick and eager to be patient over it ; but when Ella had fixed, both worked with good will. It required a good deal of self-denial to get through the clothes, and daily had Grace to give up her amusing book and other pleasures that she might do her share. She had also to deny herself everything that was not quite necessary in order to save from her allowance enough to help in buying the materials wanted, and to pay her part of the sum needed to board the children, for though Daniel brought home all his money, that was not sufficient ; and very often none came from the father. She did it all very cheerfully, and there was joy to her in the thought that, by giving up her own amusements and working for

these helpless ones, she was trying to follow Him Who "pleased not Himself," Whose example her parents had always set before her.

It was a happy day for all the schoolroom party when Lizzy, clean, with short smooth hair and neat dress, first entered the school, where the girls were to take it in turn to pay for her. The cobbler's wife had taken pains to cure her of the bad words she had learned, and to make her clean and healthy (not an easy task), and now it was hoped she would begin to improve. Jemmy or Jemima also received her clothes; but she was too young yet for school.

One day, soon after Lizzy had begun to be trained as a Christian child, and not like a little heathen, Grace was observed by Miss Chertsey to sigh very heavily as she sat at her work of making a little petticoat for Jemmy. She looked up and said, "Are you tired, my dear? You have been sitting over that work a long time. You had better go and have one of your old games with Rose."

"O, I am not tired—not very," said Grace; "but I was thinking how many little girls there must be in London, and in other places, who are just as badly off as Daniel's sisters were. I wish I could help some more."

"When we have helped this family on farther, and given them a fair start, we will think of another," said Miss Chertsey; "but at present, dear Grace, you have as much as you can do in taking care of them. If you were to try to do more just now these would be neglected



and fall back to their old misery. I hope, by putting these children in a fair way of being well brought up, we may be the means, by God's blessing, of saving them from sin and wretchedness, and they may help others. You know Daniel has persuaded two little boys to go to the night school with him already. It is but little that young girls like you can do, Grace, but that little, done for CHRIST's sake, He can bless, and make the seed of much. How many children might be helped if every family of young girls would do their best."

"I hope Mrs. Platt will not grow tired of keeping the children," said Grace; "I do not know where we could find another lodging for them."

"No; I hope she will be ready to continue her care," replied Miss Chertsey; "it is very difficult in London to find a satisfactory home for motherless girls. But, Grace, you must get a little exercise now, for it is nearly the hour for lessons, and your head will be quite unfit for work if you sit still till then."

Grace put away her work, and was running up stairs to have a game with Rose and Blanche, when Netta called to her, "O, Grace, just come here; Ella has got her things into such disorder, and I am putting them to rights. Rose is of no use, and Blanche hates this sort of thing."

Grace was of Blanche's opinion, but she made no objection, and, till schooltime was employed by Netta in arranging and putting Ella's part of the room to rights. They just finished it

when the clock struck four and both were obliged to wash their hands and hurry to the schoolroom.

"Thank you, Grace," said Netta; "I can't think how it is that Ella, who is neater than anybody in work, should be so careless about her drawers and books, and her little table-ornaments. I always have to see to them."

"O, Grace, I am sorry you were taken up with my things," said Ella, when she heard it; "but, look here! I have undone this piece of your petticoat, and pinned it better. You had not fitted the pieces exactly."

It was rather a long bit of herring-boning that Ella had undone, but Grace smiled and thanked her, and put away the work to be done in the evening instead of a game at chess.

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## CHAPTER VI.

"Charity (Love) seeketh not her own."

A YEAR had passed since Grace had been left at her uncle's, and in the beginning of the following August, Mrs. Stopford took her children to a place on the south coast to enjoy the sea-breezes and coolness. Mr. Stopford had joined some friends on a short foreign tour. Grace was delighted to be free from the streets, the heat and the restraints of London, and to be

again in green fields and on the sea-shore. She taught her cousins more of the nature and habits of sea-creatures, and the varieties and names of plants, than they had learnt from all their books, and it being now holyday time, the girls were out almost all day. The very loss of many of the conveniences of their London house was thought good fun by the young people, and what did it matter if the rooms were smaller than their own, since there was abundant space beneath the shade of the trees or the cliffs under the open sky. Grace and her cousins sat during the heat of the day in the shade, reading, working, and sketching, and took long rambles in the evening, and all enjoyed the freedom and the change, and thought nothing could be more delightful. The house was an old one; for Mr. Stopford thought his family would be more comfortable in a house possessing a garden, and close to fields, than in a row looking on the sea in August. There were two flights of stairs, one leading to the kitchen, the other to the sitting-rooms, but having no communication with each other (for the house had been built originally as two) excepting from the attics; Mrs. Stopford, with Ella and Netta, had rooms over the sitting-apartments; Grace with Blanche and Rose occupied one over the kitchen; and the servants were in an attic above Mrs. Stopford's room. At the back of the chamber where Grace slept there was a small room, used now for the empty hampers and boxes. One

night, about three weeks after their arrival, Grace, who was a light sleeper, was awakened by a suffocating sensation, and became aware that a thick smoke was filling the room. She sprang from bed, and her first impulse was to open the door. Happily she did so very gently, and only a little way: for outside was a thick volume of smoke and flame. Grace shut the door instantly to exclude the fire, which was spreading along the passage from the stairs, and rang the bell violently. In her agony of terror, she uttered a prayer for help, and then, locking the door to prevent Blanche and Rose from rushing into destruction, she waked them both as gently as she could. Her voice trembled so that she could scarcely speak, but she managed to tell them that there was fire, and that they must get up and put on some clothes at once. It was well she had locked the door, for both ran to it instantly. She rang again violently, and this time heard by the cries in the house that the fire had been discovered.

"Be quick, darlings, and don't cry," she said to the terrified children; "we shall be helped; they will get a ladder, and take us out of the window."

She hastily threw on their clothes, for they were too frightened to do anything but sob, and Rose could scarcely be kept from fighting for the key of the door. Then she took the blankets and wrapped them up in these. Meantime, the crackling of the flames increased, the smoke grew thicker, and she expected each

moment to see the door on fire. Below the window there was fire also, the tongues of flame reaching out towards the room below hers, and making a descent from the window every instant more doubtful. Wild cries of alarm reached her ear as she hastily prepared for escape, and, looking out, she saw her aunt ghastly with alarm, and the servants gazing up to her window. She opened it a little and said, "Dear aunt, we are safe and ready;" but her voice was drowned in the screams with which Blanche and Rose implored help. "They will bring ladders," cried the agonised mother, and, turning to the people who were gathering from the nearest houses, she implored assistance.

"Oh, shall we be burnt? Will God let us die?" cried Blanche, with sobs clinging to Grace; while Rose would have sprung from the window had not her cousin held her tight. Grace saw the door had caught, the fire was coming on them from behind, she prayed in low whispers for protection, and thought of the three children in the burning fiery furnace.

Suddenly, in the breathless crowd below, there was a murmur of hope, a ladder was planted against the window, and a man ascended. Well was it for Rose and Blanche then that Grace had learned so well to think of others before herself. She said, "Now one of you can go, which will wait?" Rose eagerly scrambled to the ledge, while Blanche hung back, and Grace supporting the child till the man could

take her, Rose was firmly seized and borne down to her mother.

But Blanche saw the flames spreading from below ; the height of the window made her giddy ; she seemed powerless ; and Grace, a child herself, could not lift her. " Dear Blanche, don't fear," she said ; " Rose is safe, and you will be ; don't give way ;" while each moment lessened her own chance of safety. The sight of the fire in the room at length roused Blanche ; she got outside with her cousin's assistance, and, trembling violently, was taken up by the man. But the flames had spread to the ladder, and it was with the utmost exertion and through a peril which shocked the bystanders that he bore the child to the ground. To save Grace so was impossible.

Mrs. Stopford saw her niece alone enveloped in smoke, flames darting around her, and exclaimed, " She must not perish—save her ! save her !"

" She must be got into the room above," shouted Nurse Brunton. A loud cry arose for a rope ; but, without waiting, two gentlemen rushed up the front stairs to the attic above Grace's room, tore the sheets from the bed, knotted them together, and let them as a rope down to Grace. She caught hold of the lowest with both hands, got on the ledge supported by those above, and held on with all her might. It was a fearful moment ; for part of her dress had caught fire, and hung blazing from her as she was drawn up. She held fast, and they had

soon got her to the attic window. The burning garment was torn away, and she was with some trouble got through the narrow window. Not a moment was to be lost even then, and quickly they led the trembling girl to the other staircase, to which there was access from above, and which the fire had only just reached, half carried her down it, and placed her in safety beside her aunt. Grace fell into the arms opened to receive her, and became unconscious. She was carried into a house near, where her cousins already were, and Nurse Brunton soon succeeded in restoring her senses, but it was discovered that her right leg was scorched, and indeed slightly burnt above the ankle. By this time a fire-engine had arrived, and, after some hours, the fire was put out, but not before it had destroyed the greater part of the house.

Every one had felt the shock of this fearful night, and all were looking ill for several days afterwards, but soon thankfulness for their preservation took the place of the nervous terror which at first prevailed. Even Rose and Blanche though scarcely able to sleep at first after their awful peril, recovered their spirits in a few days, but Grace did not rally from the state of weakness and languor which followed her escape. Till the burn on her leg was well, Mrs. Stopford did not think much of this; but when no injury was longer apparent, she was grieved to find that her niece had no strength to walk, and no appetite, and was looking very unwell. She called in the best advice the place afforded, and

was told that it was likely Grace would be some time in recovering ; medicine was not much wanted, but she must be kept quiet, and not exert herself in any way.

The remaining three weeks spent by the sea were so different from the first, and Grace's weakness made the comforts of home so much more needful, that no one was sorry when the day came for returning to Kensington Gardens. The journey fatigued Grace so much that she was sent to bed as soon as possible, and Netta and Ella were to dine with their parents late ; so Blanche and Rose, to their great satisfaction, had the schoolroom and Miss Chertsey, who had arrived in the morning, all to themselves at teatime, and were able to tell her all the danger and fright they had gone through.

Rose thought most of her own terror ; Blanche had been chiefly impressed by the calmness and fortitude of her cousin. " Papa says, and mamma, too, that Grace was quite a heroine," said Blanche ; " they did not say so to her, but I heard them call her that when they were talking over the fire together. They said she behaved so bravely and well that it was wonderful ; and then mamma said she was very like her father—he was so brave, and always thought of others. I was so much frightened that I could do nothing but cry ; I thought we should be burnt."

" And I screamed," said Rose ; " for I could not help it, the smoke and the fire and the noise were so dreadful. But Grace is older than we are."



"It was not her being older that made her quiet and brave," said Miss Chertsey; "it was quite as dreadful for her to think of being burnt as for you. What do you think made her able to help you and be calm?"

"I suppose she was not so frightened, and hoped we should be saved," said Rose.

"No; I think it was because she did not mind about herself, and thought how she could take care of us," said Blanche. "She woke us so gently, and put on our clothes, for we were so frightened we only wanted to run away, and then she put a blanket round us. And she helped us to get out of the window, and stayed herself behind, though the room was burning."

Miss Chertsey's eyes filled with tears, as Blanche spoke of Grace's danger, and she said, "It was because Grace had learned to think of other people, and to care for them, that she was able to help you. Had she been selfish she would not have been so quiet and thoughtful in danger. A selfish person can never be a heroine."

"I should like to be a heroine," said Rose, who had heard, though Grace had not, a good deal said by Nurse Brunton and others about her cousin's behaviour.

"People who are really brave, and do great things in time of danger, are not those who think about the honour of being called heroines," said Miss Chertsey, "but those who every day try to forget themselves, and in little daily matters think of others, and give up their own

pleasure to help them. Does not Grace do that?"

"I don't know," said Rose; "she always seems to do what she likes."

"O, but she is always ready to give way to Netta and Ella, and she never refuses to do anything for us unless she is really obliged, and she puts herself last if we are to have a treat," said Blanche. "I do love her very much, and I hope she will soon be well."

"She will not get well and strong very fast, I fear," said Miss Chertsey, "at least, so your mamma thinks from what the doctor said, and you must both try to be very kind to her, and not tease her to play or do things for you, but help her and amuse her, and let her be quiet when she likes it."

"I will," and "I will," said both the little girls; and Blanche added, "I shall never forget that she helped to save us from being burnt."

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## CHAPTER VII.

"Let patience have her perfect work."

TWO days afterwards Grace was sitting alone in the schoolroom, waiting for a summons to the doctor; the rest of the young people were out walking. She was not at all desirous of being made an invalid, and though she felt

weak and languid, she determined to look her best, and say as little as possible about any headaches or other ailments, lest she should be put on the sick-list. She kept very quiet, and had not even been reading since her cousins went out, for fear of looking pale and tired, on the principle, probably, of the little boy, of name unknown, but famous in act, who screwed up the master's weather glass to secure fine weather for a holyday. Mufftie was delighted, for he had such a caressing and petting as had not fallen to his share for many a day, and he had been very disconsolate while left to solitude during his mistress' absence at the seaside.

When the servant came at length to tell Miss Alford she was wanted in the drawing-room, there was no fear of her looking pale, for she blushed like a rose with nervousness. The doctor, an old friend of her uncle, did not take much notice of her at first, but continued a conversation with her aunt on the subject of some improvements she was trying to make for the health of the people in her district. Presently he turned to Grace and spoke to her about the fire, and her burn, and her headache, but very quietly, and said he hoped she would soon get stronger.

"But for the present you must be very quiet, and take a holyday from schoolroom work," he said ; and the doctor looked as if he thought he had given a very pleasant prescription, and that a holyday was the most delightful thing in the world.

Grace did not think so at all, and as she returned to the schoolroom she said to herself, "I am sure I must not be so idle, what will dear papa say if I don't get on now? I shall not be ready to go out to him in another year, and if I work hard he will let me come, because my education will be nearly finished."

So though Muffie whined, and begged hard to be played with and petted again, Grace determined to prepare her lessons, and be ready for study when Miss Chertsey returned. It was not very obedient, but she did not think of that, her longing to finish her education sufficiently to go to India was uppermost in her mind. She was, however, soon punished.

When Miss Chertsey came into the schoolroom before taking off her bonnet, she found Grace with her books open on her desk, but her head was leaning on them, and she had such a violent headache that the tears were in her eyes with pain. Miss Chertsey laid her soft cool hand on the child's burning brow, and asked what had happened. Grace told her of the doctor's visit, and of her own determination to work hard that she might not disappoint her parents.

"And so you took the hardest lessons you could," said the governess glancing at the books, "was not that rather self-willed, Gracey? Education is not only mental learning, my child, and do you think your father would wish you to risk making yourself really ill by following your own will in studying, when you are

told you must be quiet? But we will not talk about this now: go and lie down and keep quite still till this headache is gone."

She led Grace up to her room, saw her safe on her bed with a shawl over her feet, and then went to her other pupils who were now ready for her.

It was long before Grace felt any wish to lift her aching head or even open her eyes, but at last the pain was quieted, and after a little sleep she felt revived, and sat up leaning on the pillow. She confessed that the doctor was right, she must rest, for to work and learn was plainly impossible just then. But the disappointment was not less keenly felt.

"How sorry papa and mamma will be when they hear that I cannot get on with my learning," she said to herself, "and I hoped to be so clever. I should soon have been able to read with Ella and Netta, and now—" Grace sighed, and tears came fast, for she was weak and languid, and her quick disposition made her feel this more than a quieter and more patient temper would have done. She tried not to give way to fretfulness, however, and as she dried her tears and looked up, the light of the western sun falling on her print drew her gaze to it. At first the thought of her father so closely connected with it came alone, but she had learnt too many lessons from that picture not to remember some of them now.

The light brought out each form distinctly, and seemed to deepen the shadowed cross before

the feet of the Holy Child. Grace remembered the words, "He was subject unto them," and felt she must not rebel against the orders of those under whose care she was left, she must submit though it seemed hard to do so. Her father had taught her how through all His Life on earth, the SAVIOUR bore His Cross in obedience to His FATHER'S Will, from His lowly cradle at Bethlehem, to His death on Calvary. She looked at the Heavenly Child bearing His burden of wood, the type of that Cross, and thought for how many years He waited before going forth to accomplish that work for which He came on earth, how patiently He abode at Nazareth till His appointed time.

"Yet in meek silence to abide  
For many a year at Mary's side;  
Nor heed, though restless spirits ask,  
What ! hath the CHRIST forgot His task ?"

"He pleased not Himself," and in willingly giving up her own wish to study, in submitting to the weakness and the languor now permitted to try her, Grace felt she must follow Him. She resolved to be patient that she might please Him, and not by fretfulness and complaining worry or vex her friends. Rising from her couch she knelt to ask His help, and the grace of His Spirit to make her meek and patient, then as the tea-bell rang she made her hair neat and went down quiet and cheerful to join her cousins.

There were some friends dining with her

uncle and aunt, so she was to stay in the school-room that she might not be tired by company. Blanche offered to stay with her, but Grace would not let her do so, and after her cousins were gone down, she enjoyed a nice chat with Miss Chertsey. They talked of Annie and Lucy Savile, and of the patient quiet life of suffering the latter had to lead, and Grace remembered how gentle she always was, and cheerful. And then Miss Chertsey told her how far more delightful it would be to her parents to find her a gentle Christian woman, well-trained in patience and love and unselfishness, than were she to surprise them by being wonderfully learned and clever.

"And do you think God has let me be ill that I may be good and patient?" said Grace, as she sat leaning her head on Miss Chertsey's knee.

"Yes, darling, I am sure it is for your good. He has for a time allowed you to lose your health. He will teach you better than I can, Grace, if you will let Him, and I hope in a few months you will be quite strong again."

Grace pressed closer to her for a few minutes and then said, "Now I am sure you must want to dress and go into the drawing-room, I will go on with Jemmy's sun-bonnet, and go to bed soon."

All through the winter which followed, Grace was very weak, and passed her time chiefly on the sofa in the drawing-room or schoolroom, or in the large easy chair to which nurse wel-

comed her. Work, reading or drawing soon wearied her, and for great part of each day she could do very little, though willing to exert herself. Her usual studies were quite given up, and she could not bear the sound of the piano, so that she was often sent to the nursery or drawing-room for quiet. All this was trying, and it required constant care and watching on her part to keep off impatience, and to be cheerful. Her cousins were kind, but strong girls in health could not tell what it was to be constantly languid and weak, nor did any of them guess what punishment it was to Grace to lose her studies. Ella and Rose, and indeed Netta, saw nothing that was not rather pleasant in escaping head-work, and Blanche was the only one inclined to pity her on that account. Except an occasional short drive in mild weather, Grace had no change out of doors, for she could not walk; and so passed the weary winter. Her most regular employment was making clothes for the little sweeper and his sisters, whose stock of socks and other garments was much enlarged by her work, and one of her greatest pleasures was to have one or other of the little girls with her for an hour in the nursery, to teach and amuse. It must be observed, however, by the way, that this sort of employment was not what Grace would have chosen as most pleasant to herself; she was not fond of needle-work, nor did she find the amusement many girls would have done in playing with little children. But she wished to do what was put



before her, to help and benefit others, and she daily kept to her rule of self-denial by giving up her entertaining book to work for the little motherless girls, or to encourage them in learning, by hearing Lizzie's hymns, or Jemima's A B C.

Towards the end of the winter Grace became stronger, her headaches were less frequent, and she was allowed by degrees to resume her studies. But returning health brought its own trials, a period of convalescence is as every one knows who has gone through it, a very trying time. The going back to the habits of health, the ceasing of the care, and peculiar attention illness required, and the difficulty of knowing how far strength will go, all combine to try an invalid. Grace was surprised to find herself at times more impatient and inclined to fret over little trials than she had been for the whole winter, but generally she subdued these feelings quickly.

One afternoon her cousins were surprised by a visit from an aunt of theirs with four young people, her nephews and nieces. They came to the early dinner, and were to stay till five o'clock. Grace had been working harder than she could well bear in the morning, for she felt well and was anxious to make up for lost time, but the merriment and the number of voices soon brought on a bad headache after dinner, and she was sent to her room to keep quiet. The pain went off after some time, but she did not feel able to bear any noise, so she stayed

upstairs. She thought one or other of her cousins would come to sit with her a little, but they were all engaged with their friends and did not remember that Grace must feel lonely. She was not inclined to do much work, and she had no book she cared to read, so the afternoon did seem very dull. She thought it unkind of Ella or Netta not to look after her, and indeed they might have done so, for the visitors were more of Blanche's age than theirs, and one or other would not have been missed had they gone for a few minutes to enliven their cousin. But they did not think of this, and Grace allowed herself to become unhappy about it, and to fancy them unkind. She did not see she was selfish in this, and she was not on her guard against her temper, so it gave way.

About four o'clock Nurse Brunton came to her, and made up her fire, and asked her to come into the nursery and sit with her, but Grace was not inclined to move, nor did she speak more than she could help to the nurse. Brunton stayed some little time in her room, not liking her to be alone, but Grace was thinking too much of herself to be pleased with this kindness, and the nurse not finding herself welcome, went away. She came back, however, before going to her tea to ask if Grace would like a candle, but it was refused, and the child sat on gloomily in the dark.

At last the visitors being gone and the hour for tea drawing near Ella thought of her cousin, and ran up to see if she would not come down.

To her surprise she got a very short answer, and found Grace looking almost cross. Very goodnatured though not very thoughtful, Ella tried to amuse her by relating the fun they had been having with their guests, but found that she was considered unkind. Ella did not know what to make of her reception, it was so unlike Grace's ways, but Netta, who had followed her, cut the matter short by observing that Grace had better get ready for tea, and drew her sister away.

Blanche's heart smote her when the visitors had left, for not having gone to Grace all the afternoon, and as soon as she and Rose had put away the books and other things with which the schoolroom was strewed, she went to Grace followed by Rose. Blanche was very fond of her cousin, and quite sincere when she said that she had missed her, and that she really was sorry that she had not left her playfellows for a little while to come to her. Grace did not allow herself to consider that her cousins ought to amuse their visitors, she had been pitying herself for a long time, and the only reply Blanche got was a reproach for all being so unkind to her.

Blanche was very sorry, and with tears in her eyes began to pity Grace for not having been able to join them. Grace did not look at her, but murmured that they did not care for her or love her, and that it was no good telling her they were sorry when they had left her alone so long.

She had often been left quite as long, and had welcomed them with smiles, and been glad to hear of their pleasures on their return, but now self was uppermost. Poor child! Rose who was sharp, and keensighted for other people's faults, now exclaimed, "Grace, you are quite cross. You ought to be ashamed of being so selfish. Blanche is very kind to you, she does not deserve you should speak so to her. If you were a little girl you ought to be well punished. Come, Blanche, let us go down to tea, and don't cry about Grace, she is only cross."

Grace's cheek flushed crimson at Rose's sharp speech, she looked up and saw her drag Blanche to the door, and the eyes of the latter rested on her a moment full of tears. The child did not speak to either of them, her door was shut, and she was again alone. It might have been thought that Rose would only have made her cousin very angry, and no doubt she would had Grace been less in earnest in trying to overcome selfishness than she really was. She had forgotten herself that day, and never found out that she was in a bad temper and selfish till Rose's severe speech opened her eyes, and showed her the truth, and then came feelings of most bitter sorrow and disappointment. Grace had hoped that she had conquered selfishness and impatience, and was really grown gentle and kind, yet now she had fallen into petulance and ill-temper, all through thinking of herself. It was a very hard and bitter dis-

covery to make, and as Grace recalled Blanche's sorrowful look, she felt still more unhappy. Then looking up to her picture on which the firelight played, she thought to herself, "O what would papa have felt if he had heard me speak so, and seen how I have been going on to-day? And I hoped I was so much improved, but it is all a mistake, I am just as bad as ever."

The pain of these feelings was too much for Grace, as through her tears she looked at the illuminated lines traced by her father's hand, and at the patient holy form before her. O how different was she to Him! She longed for her mother that she might weep in her lap and tell her all, but after sobbing bitterly for some time she remembered that though her parents could not hear or comfort her she might go to her FATHER in Heaven, against Whom she had been much more offending, and He would hear and pardon. Grace did so and prayed very earnestly and very humbly.

She was interrupted by a knock at her door, and Miss Chertsey entered, having heard Blanche's account of her cousin not being at all like her usual self. Grace sprang to her, and would not let her pity or caress her, but as Miss Chertsey sat down on the low chair by the fire to hear what was the matter, she confessed simply and very penitently how selfish and cross she had been, and begged she would ask her cousins to forgive her.

"I was afraid Rose had been unkind, she

herself allowed she had spoken sharply," said Miss Chertsey.

"No she was quite right, I did behave very ill to Ella and Blanche, I was very naughty," said Grace, "and I hoped, I thought I had got to be gentle and not selfish, but I am not at all better;" and the tears fell again as she hid her face on Miss Chertsey's knee.

"Do not say that, Grace dear," said her governess, "you have been trying, and you are improved, but it is a task which lasts for our lifetime to root out all remains of sin and selfishness. We have to watch and pray always or the evil plant shoots up again. You have fallen to-day, Grace, but do not be discouraged, only try to be more careful, and never cease looking to our SAVIOUR for help. Is your head bad now?" she continued, as she felt the child's hot brow.

"It is aching again," said Grace, "but I must come down to tea."

"You shall have your tea here, my child, you do not look fit to bear any voices."

Grace thanked her, and was now glad to be quiet. In a few minutes appeared nurses with the tea, followed by Blanche who said, "I am come to have tea with you, Grace, Miss Chertsey thinks I shall not make your head worse. Ella and Netta send their love, and Rose is very sorry she spoke so sharply to you."

"Dear, dear Blanche," exclaimed Grace clasping her very warmly in her arms, and the two sat down to tea together, Blanche doing all the

honours, and supremely happy to find that Grace soon got better and was able to smile again.

After tea Miss Chertsey came and read them a story, and then sent Grace (who still felt very sad at her conduct that day) early to bed.

The warning to watch against the return of selfishness was not forgotten, her fall into ill-temper and petulance made Grace more careful and more humble, and she strove constantly to think and feel more for others, less for herself.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

“Those whom He loves and calls His own,  
He early tries them, heart and soul.”

“**E**LLA dear, come to me a moment,” said Mrs. Stopford one morning in May, “I want to speak to you.”

Ella ran into the drawing-room where she found her mother looking agitated and pale, with the newspapers of that and the preceding day in her hand.

“Miss Chertsey does not let Grace or the two little girls look at the papers, Ella, does she?” inquired Mrs. Stopford.

“No, mamma, she looks at them herself after we are all gone down stairs, and now and then if there is anything interesting she reads it to us.”

“Well then beg her to be particularly careful

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just now that Grace does not see them. I meant to have mentioned it to her last night, but I did not see her."

"What is the matter, mamma?" asked Ella, "are there bad news from India?"

Then Mrs. Stopford told her of the first report of that fearful mutiny which struck terror into all hearts in England, and sent mourning into many homes.

"And will our uncle be in danger?" said Ella fearfully.

"I tremble for him, my love," replied her mother with a sigh, "but I do not think he can have anything to dread from his own men, he has always been so good to them, and is so beloved. We must pray for him and your aunt, and trust it may please God to protect them."

"Shall you say anything to Grace, mamma, or wait to hear more?"

"I shall wait a few days till the mail is in, and then we shall have some news more certain than this. It is of no use to make the poor child unhappy till something clear is known."

Ella went to the schoolroom where she found Grace standing by the window looking so grave that she half feared she must have heard of the tidings from India, but she was soon reassured. Grace turned to her and said; "What do you think can be done, Ella? Lizzy has been here on her way to school to tell us that Mrs. Page is going to leave the court and go into the country, and that she cannot keep her and Jemmy more



than a fortnight longer. Do you think aunt can get another person to take them? I am so very sorry."

Ella's mind was full of the trouble which was hanging over themselves, and she did not think much of the difficulty of providing a new home for the little motherless girls, some one might be found to take them, she said. In the evening Daniel came himself to speak about his little sisters. He could sleep anywhere, he said, and did not care for himself, but he could not bear for them to be neglected and ill-used as they had been before. Grace was very anxious about the children, and promised Daniel that she would speak to her uncle and aunt for him ; they would not let the little girls be left uncared for, she was sure.

Mrs. Stopford did inquire throughout her district, and spoke of the children to some of her friends, but it did not seem easy to secure a respectable or comfortable home for them. Daniel too must be thought of, she would not if possible throw him among bad examples and into temptation, just as he was of an age to suffer by them. His lot was however, soon decided. He came as usual on Sunday evening to see Grace, who used to hear him read a little and examine into his progress generally, ending by reading to him some story. While he was waiting to be admitted into the schoolroom, a friend of Mr. Stopford's happened to come into the passage wanting a light. The boy immediately took a candlestick which stood on

a table near, struck a light with a match-box he had in his pocket, and offered it to him. When the gentleman went into the drawing-room he asked Mrs. Stopford if the civil boy who had lighted his candle were page to the schoolroom, for he seemed, added he, to be in attendance there.

Mrs. Stopford was rather perplexed till on a closer description she recognised Daniel, and replied smiling that he was a protégé of her children, and a sweeper.

"Pity he should be left to that sort of employment," was the answer, "I think he looks fit for something better; but I suppose he is very ignorant."

"No, I believe not," said Mrs. Stopford, "he goes regularly to a night school, and to our Sunday school, and to church, and the girls tell me he can read and write very fairly."

"Oh indeed, then I think I can do something for him, I have been looking out for a bright steady lad. If you will tell him to call on me to-morrow evening at six, I'll see about taking him to a friend of mine."

Two evenings afterwards just as the girls were going down to the drawing-room Daniel was brought into the hall, his face looked bright with pleasure. He told his kind friends that the gentleman who had sent for him had introduced him to a friend who had a large business in the City, and that after hearing him read, and seeing him write and cast accounts, he had offered him a place as errand-boy under

his foreman who would give him a bed and look to him. It was a place where if he worked well he could get on, and would be able to live very comfortably. Here was an end to their difficulties about him, they knew that the gentleman who had taken him by the hand was one who looked well after his people and cared for them, so nothing could be better. Daniel assured Grace that he would go to Church always, and continue to attend a school, for he saw learning was a good thing.

He was to begin his new employment in two days, and before he left his present home for the City, Grace prepared some additions to his wardrobe, and made him a present of a well bound Bible, with one or two other books. He had been her especial charge, and though glad that he had now such fair prospects before him, she was sorry that she could no longer see and instruct him.

"I am afraid I am selfish," she said to Miss Chertsey, "but I should so much have liked to have him near us. Do you think he will be able to be taught still?"

"The man he is to lodge with is a very good scholar, I hear," said Miss Chertsey, "and there will still be evening classes for him to attend. He is old enough now to improve himself. You may feel glad, Gracey, that you have been allowed to take part in a good work for this poor boy, and one which we will hope may tell on all his life. As to our pleasure in doing good, and in the love of those we benefit, that

must be very secondary, I am sure our real reward is to feel that we have been faintly showing our gratitude to Him who so greatly loves us, and have been helping to bring another into the knowledge of that love."

"What fun it would be," cried Rose, "if Daniel should some day be quite a rich man, and perhaps ride in his carriage, and marry a handsome wife, and have Lizzy and Jemmy dressed like young ladies. How odd it would be then to remember what little ragged children they were, and that we could hardly find a home for them."

She laughed at her own picture, and added, "It would make quite a story—'Daniel and his Broom,' instead of 'Whittington and his Cat.'"

"The story has only begun," said Grace; "the sweeper is an errand-boy only yet—a long way from being Lord Mayor, Rose."

"O, never mind; I have heard of just such things coming to pass; I dare say he will soon be more than an errand-boy; I know he helps the foreman with some of the little accounts in the evening already."

"And while he is climbing up to be a great man," said Grace, "we cannot even find a home for his sisters."

"Mamma heard of something yesterday from a lady where we called. Ella, you know all about it. Do leave stooping over that pattern, and tell Grace what Mrs. Roberts said about a home for girls. I was making her fat King

Charles try to jump over my parasol, and I did not hear much."

Ella went on tracing her pattern till she had come to a convenient place to pause at, and answered, "I believe some lady is going to have a regular home to receive motherless girls, where they will be well taken care of, and brought up, but it is not ready yet. Mrs. Roberts said she knew a woman who would take Lizzy and Jemmy for a few months, in a court she now and then goes to."

"O," said Grace; "Aunt never told me that; I am so glad."

"I don't know," said Ella, slowly, "that it is anything to be glad of; she said the woman was not good-tempered. But it is the only place we can hear of, and so I suppose they must go. If she treats them badly, mamma will look out for somebody else."

"They must not be ill treated," said Grace, her colour rising, and tears in her eyes. "Poor little things! Lizzy is getting quite a good girl, and dear little Jemmy, I am sure she would make any body kind to her."

"The worst of it is that the court where Mrs. Jones lives is far from mamma's, and not in the same parish; so Lizzy will not be at the school where we go, and we shall not be able to see her, but Mrs. Roberts said that perhaps she might now and then ask after her," said Ella.

Grace did not feel much pleased at the plan for her two little protégées, but she knew her

aunt would do the best she could for the children, and she tried to be contented, and hope Mrs. Jones would not prove so very ill-tempered after all.

Mrs. Stopford herself was not satisfied at the change for the little girls, but she was not able to hear of a better person to take care of them, and as Mrs. Jones was tidy-looking and honest, she arranged with her to receive them at once, as Mrs. Page was anxious to pack her furniture and household goods ready for her departure.

Lizzy and Jemmy came to have their dinner in Mrs. Stopford's kitchen, while their clothes, which had been all washed and sent up in a basket by Mrs. Page, were looked over in the schoolroom, that they might go neat to their new home.

Mrs. Page had not been careless of her charges' things. The frocks and other garments were all in good order, and nicely got up, and the bonnets had been kept clean. The thanks of the schoolroom were voted to Mrs. Page, and hopes were expressed that Mrs. Jones would do as well.

Grace was in some terror about a certain stick which Mrs. Jones had spoken of as a means of keeping her own child in order, and had begged her aunt entirely to prohibit its use on Lizzy and Jemmy. Mrs. Stopford did not do so completely, as she thought it better to avoid what might only lead to some deceit, but she did very earnestly insist on kindness and

care and on no violent measures being at any time used to the girls. Grace and Ella on their side talked a good deal to Lizzy, and gave her much good advice about being very obedient and well-behaved, and patient, if Mrs. Jones did get angry. Grace especially told the child to take all the care she could of her little sister, and not to tease her, but to try to make her good and happy when they were together. Jemima was soon to go to an infant school, when she would be less likely to provoke Mrs. Jones' temper, and this was some comfort to Grace. Lizzy promised to be careful, and not to say naughty things, which last fault had been Mrs. Page's great trouble with her, and she asked very anxiously if the other woman would beat her.

"No, no," said Grace, eagerly ; but Ella said more gravely to the child, "Mrs. Stopford thinks she will be kind to you, and take care of you, but you must not be rude to her, or say naughty words, or you will deserve to be beaten." Lizzy promised to try, and she and her little sister, on whom Blanche had been bestowing much petting and several old toys, were then given into Mrs. Jones' care.

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CHAPTER IX:

"If Thou shouldst call me to resign  
 What most I prized ; it ne'er was mine ;  
 O let not Thou my heart repine.  
 Thy Will be done."

"NO letters for me? no Indian letters?" exclaimed Grace, on the morning after the day on which she usually heard from her parents. The question was addressed to the butler, who generally brought her these letters as soon as they arrived.

"No, Miss Alford, none," he replied, and went hastily away, for like everyone in the house who read the papers, he dreaded daily what news might come of Colonel Alford.

Grace had noticed that her uncle and aunt looked anxious lately, but she did not think of their anxiety being connected with herself, and though surprised at not receiving any letters, she scarcely feared anything wrong. After breakfast, when Mrs. Stopford came to the schoolroom, as she generally did to make the arrangements for the girls to walk or drive, she asked leave for Grace to come to her room; and putting her arm round her kindly, led her there.

Grace was struck by her aunt's paleness, and by the look of weeping in her eyes, and her heart beat quickly with dread of some evil. She had not received any letters, but perhaps



some tidings from India had reached her aunt. Mrs. Stopford made her sit beside her on the sofa, and Grace saw that she held in her hand an Indian letter. She exclaimed, "You have news of papa and mamma, auntie; I was so disappointed I had no letter. Are they well? Why have they not written to me?"

"There is a letter for you, Gracey," said Mrs. Stopford, still keeping her arm round Grace; "but your father asks me to tell you something first about India, and the troubles there."

Grace looked very eager and grave, for she saw by her aunt's face that some danger threatened her father.

"I did not tell you, darling, our fears on the news which alarmed us, for I hoped your dear father might not be in danger, but now you must know that there has been an almost general mutiny of the Sepoys, and a rising among the natives, which have occasioned great alarm and consternation among all our own people, and the loss of many lives. Many officers have been killed by their troops, and many fearful things have been done by the Sepoys, and by the natives. We hoped that it was not so bad as the papers represented, and I would not tell you till this mail came in, because I would not make you unhappy without cause."

"And papa is safe?" gasped Grace, trembling.

"Yes; he writes a short note to me to say where he is going, and here is your letter."

Grace took it eagerly. The first part was

from her mother, and spoke only of rumours of disaffection, and of reports of mutiny in distant stations, but when she had read three pages came a later date, and a few hurried lines, saying that Colonel Alford had been summoned to another station, and was to march in an hour's time. These ended with her mother's blessing, and on the same page were a few equally hurried lines from her father, as follows:—

“MY DEAREST CHILD,—

“Your mother is gone to prepare a few things for me, as I must depart in less than an hour for the station where Colonel M—— is. You will hear from your aunt some account of the fearful state of the country here, but do not be too much alarmed about me and your mother. It is true that dangers are very near us, but the good Providence of God is our trust, and He will care for us, as He sees best. Do not be unhappy, my dear one, because we are at present in peril. We have One mighty to save, Who watches over us among enemies here, and over our child in quiet England. Remember, dear Grace, our conversations together, and in whatever trials it may please God to permit us to suffer, look to Him Who pleased not Himself, but Whose whole life was obedience to His FATHER's Will.

“The bugle call is sounding. God bless my child.

“H. J. ALFORD.”

Then came a short postscript from her mother. "Papa is gone; his men, he says, he can feel sure of; and if hearty devotion to their welfare, and judicious kindness, could secure their fidelity, it may, indeed, be depended on, but, alas! others have felt the same and been deceived. Our trust is only but most surely in the LORD. I go on to join Colonel M——'s lady, and some others at —— to-morrow. I do not wish to remain here alone. Once more, may God bless and keep you, dearest."

Grace could scarcely read these lines for the fast falling tears which flowed from her eyes. Her aunt pressed her to her bosom, while she read the letter which Grace held out to her after finishing it herself, and tried to speak of comfort, though, indeed, fearing that the fate of other brave officers might be her brother's.

As soon as her aunt returned to her the letter, Grace went to her own room, and sat down on a little stool just beneath her cherished picture, to read it over and over again. Her father was going into danger—going to a fresh station; there the men would not know him, would not love him, as his own did; he felt his life in peril himself. Grace did not cry now, but she sat as though pressed down by a heavy weight, beneath her fears, and the new terrible thought that at that very moment her own dear father might be among enemies, in the midst of dark angry faces, and glaring fierce eyes full of evil passions. She could not bear the terrible picture her fancy drew, it seemed so real; the

very voices, harsh and menacing, of enraged men seemed to sound in her ears; she threw herself on her knees, and, clasping her hands over her bent brow, she prayed with sad earnestness that her father might be protected, that his life might not be touched.

But Colonel Alford was not there among the wild dark forms his child pictured, and those angry tumultuous voices rang not in his ear; the noble soldier's career was well ended; that agony and strife were past; and could he have been permitted to look upon his kneeling child as she pleaded in anguish for his life, he might have bade her be of good comfort, for his toils, his battles were over: the crown was now his own. While she thought of him as in the tumult of mutiny, in the perils of war, he was already at peace, and in perfect safety. And his child, his beloved one, was an orphan! Even so; but another month must pass ere a report of this could reach the trembling ones, whose prayer arose so constantly for him. A long weary month. The days darkly overshadowed by fear and suspense followed slowly one another, and it was far more the trust that Almighty Love would do all things well, than any hope of good tidings which gave them any cheerful ray.

Yet Grace did not give way to her own feelings, or let her sorrow make her selfish and exacting. She could not feel lively, or be ready to enjoy the amusements of her younger cousins, but she did all she could not to vex or sadden

them. Blanche and Rose had scarcely known their uncle, and though they felt sorry for their mother's trouble, their own hearts were not saddened by it. They pitied Grace for her anxiety, but they did not know how heavy was her grief, how low her heart sunk in fear, and they expected her to take part as usual in their occupations. And she tried to do so, forgetting herself, and bearing sweetly the little daily vexations and troubles which came through Rose's impatience, or Netta's activity. Well did she remember her father's last advice and instruction on the morning of her birthday, and now more than ever she recalled it as most precious. Her light childish trials were giving place to heavier ones. The burden of grief and fear was now her Cross, and her submission was required where indeed it was only with tears she could say, Thy will be done. Each morning, as she looked on her picture, she felt she could understand better its teaching of entire obedience, and she asked not in vain for the grace which might enable her to take up her cross in meek submission.

But naturally she was more and more anxious as the monthly post drew near, and the old headaches returned at times in consequence. The post came, but no letters at all for her. In the papers Mrs. Stopford saw the report of Colonel Alford's murder on the following morning; but till it should be confirmed she would not tell Grace. Miss Chertsey also hoped that it might be contradicted, and both agreed not

to give the child fresh pain till something was known with certainty.

In the afternoon, before the usual school hour, Grace went into the schoolroom after the girls had returned from their walk. She had taken off her hat, and was ready for the lessons, but in the room were Blanche and Rose just as they had come in doors. Both were eagerly bending over something, and as Grace entered the open door she heard distinctly these words read by Rose in a frightened tone, "The men fired, and Colonel Alford fell—another irreparable loss of a brave and good officer." Her low scream of agony made both the children start guiltily; they had not seen her enter, and they were frightened at being surprised in doing a forbidden thing. Grace's look, however, put their own fears of reproof to flight. Blanche threw her arms round her cousin silently, and Rose stood frightened at her pale face.

"Did you say Colonel Alford—papa?" stammered Grace trembling, "was it he who was fired at?"

"Yes," said Rose. "Oh, Grace, we did not think you were there."

Blanche sobbed in silence, but Grace stood still, not as it were really believing what she had heard. Rose brought her the paper, but she turned away, not even then would she disobey.

At that moment, Miss Chertsey, who had little thought of Rose disobeying orders, and

taking the paper out of the drawer she had put it in, entered and looked in surprise at the trembling girls. Grace flew to her, saying in a hoarse whisper, "Papa," and Blanche, who had been led by Rose's curiosity to join in looking at the paper, said in her confused manner, "It was all our fault, we did not know Grace was there, and we read it out loud."

Miss Chertsey was doubly grieved, at Grace's sorrow, and at the disobedience of the little girls. She took the paper from Rose, who stood looking much like a culprit, and desired both to sit down at once to their lessons, while she took Grace cold and trembling to her own room. In about an hour she came into the schoolroom where Ella and Netta were keeping order, and had been endeavouring to bring Rose to a proper sense of her naughtiness, while comforting Blanche who blamed herself for Grace's sorrow.

"How is Gracey, now?" was the question from all as soon as Miss Chertsey returned.

"She is quieter now," said Miss Chertsey whose eyes were very tearful, "but the news reaching her so suddenly was such a shock to her that she could not at first control herself, and I feared she would become hysterical. She was very good, and tried hard to be patient, and now she is lying on the sofa in your mamma's room."

"But perhaps it is not true," said Netta, "it may have been some one else who was killed. Mamma came in just now, and she said she

had not meant Grace to know till it was certain."

"I fear there can be little doubt," replied Miss Chertsey, "for Colonel M—— was mentioned as having escaped, and he had been the only officer of that rank at the station, till your uncle's coming. I did try to give Grace that hope, but when I looked again at the account, I saw there could hardly be a mistake."

"Poor Grace," said Ella as she dried her own weeping eyes, "how miserable she will be! She was always thinking of her father and longing to go to him."

"She will feel his loss very very much, but she is trying to bear it very sweetly," said her governess. "She sent her love to you, Blanche and Rose, and said she was sure you would be sorry for her."

Blanche was very sorry, and had been crying almost ever since she saw the effect her disobedience had had; and Rose, though never willing to allow herself to be wrong, was more grieved than she had let her sisters see, and afterwards, when going to bed, told Miss Chertsey she would try to be more obedient. She had fancied there was some fresh Indian news, and her curiosity made her draw Blanche secretly into the schoolroom, when as she thought, no one would be there, to see what it was.

Two days later Grace received a letter from her friend Annie Savile, written by her mother's desire to say how very deeply they all



grieved for her, and to enclose a short note from Edgar, which contained his account of his own escape, and the death of his beloved colonel. Grace took the letter to her room, that she might be quite alone and unobserved, while she read Edgar's hurried description of the dreadful day which had made her an orphan.

He told his mother that they had marched all through the night, and only stopping when quite necessary to rest the men, had reached the station where Colonel M—— presided, the following evening. Colonel Alford found that the men were in a very disturbed state, not yet openly mutinous but quite ready for an outbreak. Colonel M—— was not an officer who had ever cared for his men, or in any degree won their respect or love, and he was in great fear on finding his authority disregarded. Colonel Alford saw to the quarters for his men and spoke to them on their duty, and the next morning he went on parade and addressed the other troops in a tone of firmness and kindness. He had determined, Edgar said, to see if they would return to their duty, and if not to disarm them.

All might have gone well, but for an obstinate and injudicious proceeding on the part of Colonel M—— which inflamed the minds of the Sepoys. During the morning Colonel Alford was chiefly among his own men directing them what to do, and explaining his plans to the officers. In the middle of the day, having found all apparently quiet, he retired to his own room

according to his custom, and continued the religious instruction he was in the habit of giving to his own servant, Sivaji, who had by his means been converted from heathenism, and was about to be baptized. He was interrupted by tidings that some disturbance was going on, and hastily putting on his cap and sword, he ran to Colonel M——'s quarters. Not finding him he went to the court of the barracks, where a number of Sepoys were standing in groups. A fierce growl as it seemed arose that he was Colonel M——, several of the men instantly fired, ere Sivaji who was following his master could shout his name, and the brave and good Colonel Alford fell without a groan. All was tumult then, Sivaji alarmed the officers, but they could do nothing to quell it, and could only endeavour to escape. Whether all had done so Edgar did not know, Sivaji had forced him away, and hidden him in a grove of trees near an idol temple till night. Then in the darkness Sivaji, with two or three faithful Sepoys, had brought away the body of their Colonel and given it a hasty burial; the other men had dispersed, Colonel M——'s troops going towards Delhi, and the greater part of Colonel Alford's escaping to their own villages, for when he was dead they were too much in awe of the mutineers to keep together.

"I knelt and said a prayer over the grave of my more than father," wrote Edgar, "and Sivaji and I watered it truly with our tears, but we were obliged soon to leave the spot and make

use of night to fly. I cannot tell you more now, for I must not delay a moment in giving this to a messenger Sivaji has found, or you will not hear by this mail. I am quite safe at present. Write what comfort you can to poor Grace Alford, if ever daughter might be proud of a father she may, poor girl."

So the end of Colonel Alford had been like the rest of his life, noble, faithful, and unselfish, and, while his daughter wept most bitterly over her now certain loss, she felt a thankfulness in having had such a father. She must now try to follow his example, as he had ever striven to follow his Divine Master's : not pleasing herself, and bearing in meekness the Cross of earthly sorrow. That sorrow was not only for the loss of her father, but for the uncertainty which hung over the fate of her mother, for no tidings had been received of Mrs. Alford by that mail, nor were there any by the following. Had she shared the fate of many others, and been the victim of those towards whose comrades she had shown constant kindness? It was a dreadful doubt, and as reports reached England of the horrors of Delhi and Cawnpore, the sufferings of Lucknow, and the victims of other places, Mrs. Stopford shuddered to think that her sister-in-law might have perished even so. She did not tell Grace all she feared, but Grace knew that many ladies had been killed, and she too felt a sickening dread of what might be the end of their suspense. However, hope was strong in her, and she would not part with it till some certain

tidings should arrive. The state of the Indian mail was too irregular not to leave room for the comfort that it was very difficult to send letters from distant stations. So Grace tried to bear up patiently, thankful for kindness and sympathy, but not expecting her cousins to be thinking of her constantly, or to be saddened like herself by a loss they could not feel as she did. She went on diligently with her lessons as cheerfully as she could, though she broke down quite at the piano, when trying to practise a piece of Mozart's which had been a favourite with her father, and which she was learning for him; and while to read over his letters was her chief pleasure, she did not keep away from Blanche and Rose when they wanted her to join them.

It was a comfort to the orphan child to feel that her aunt shared her sorrow, and often in the evening she would sit at her feet to hear of her father's early days, of his bravery and high principle at school, of his affection and care for his sisters in after years, and of the many acts of kindness they had heard of, though never from him, which he did for his fellow-officers or his men.

Edgar Savile's next letter spoke again of his deep regret for the loss of his colonel, and mentioned his fatherly kindness towards himself in the warmest tones. He was now before Delhi, burning with indignation at the atrocities which had been committed, and impatient to avenge them, but his mother's heart trembled

at the prospect of his danger, and her anxiety increased an illness already brought on by nursing Lucy, who had been sinking in great suffering for many weeks.

Miss Chertsey, who had gone to her as usual for the holydays, found that her care would be needed much longer, both for her dying niece and her sister, and she therefore proposed to give up her situation at Mrs. Stopford's. Mrs. Stopford, however, would not allow this, she told her to take a longer holyday, for she had rather wait for her and give the girls masters, than trust her children to a stranger. Ella and Netta were considered out of the schoolroom, and they went to visit an uncle in the north of England, while their younger sisters and Grace had masters, and went on as usual under Mrs. Stopford's eye.

Unfortunately Ella who had always been considered invulnerable to that disorder, caught the measles in a bad form, and her mother was obliged to go to nurse her. She asked an old friend of her own to stay with the children while she was absent, and under her care they were left entirely, Mr. Stopford having gone to Vienna on public business.

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## CHAPTER X.

"Charity seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked. Charity beareth all things."

IT was a hot morning in the middle of August — the schoolroom was very different from its orderly quietness under Miss Chertsey's rule, and not half so pleasant to look in upon. Grace, much changed from the little fairy sprite, who with rosy cheeks and bare feet had danced on the rocks at Exmouth, sat in her deep mourning with pale face, at a desk preparing a lesson. Blanche and Rose ought to have been doing the same, but they were not so industriously disposed, and took advantage of the absence of mother and governess to do very little, so the morning was being spent in chasing each other, throwing rolled up bits of paper at Grace and at one another, and occasionally playing out of all time or tune on the piano. Grace kept steadily to her work in spite of the missiles which lodged on her dress, or among her curls, provoking bursts of laughter from mischievous Rose.

At length she looked at the clock, and said, "Is your lesson ready for Mr. Paston, Rose? it is getting late."

"Oh, it is late, and he will be here at two," cried Blanche, "I have not nearly done mine, and last time he said I was careless. I must really work hard now; Rose, do be quiet."

But Rose was too excited and full of play to stop, and delighted at having brought Grace from her books, she amused herself by springing from chair to chair, shouting, "Now I am a wild roe; now I am a squirrel." At last she sprang to a large book-case which occupied nearly one side of the room, and was of considerable height, and before either of the others could stop her she clambered up it, and seated herself on the centre which had been intended for a bust.

"Do be careful, Rose," exclaimed Grace, "you will do some mischief, or you will fall and hurt yourself."

"Never mind," cried Rose, "I shall do for a statue. I am much better than that broken-nosed bust of Sir Isaac Newton which used to be here."

"You will be broken-nosed yourself too, if you fall," said Blanche, "and you can feel, which that old bust could not."

"But really, Rose, you ought to be steady now," said Grace, "come down and I will help you with your lesson, and it will soon be done, and then I will play, or do anything you like."

"You are always wanting me to do something I don't like, Grace," said Rose, too giddy to think at that moment that she might be giving pain, "and I am not backward like you."

"Oh, Rose, how unkind!" cried Blanche.

"Well I know Miss Stone said she thought Grace very backward," replied Rose, "she said she wondered not to find her more clever, and

able to do more. She thinks her stupid, I know."

"I ought to be more forward and clever," said Grace, rather sadly, "but I do wish you would come down and finish that lesson. Miss Stone will not be pleased if Mr. Paston thinks you idle."

"Miss Stone does not mind what I do," said Rose, "she is not strict like Miss Chertsey."

This was true, but Miss Stone was only a friend on a visit, not a governess anxious to do her duty. She was very fond of children, particularly of lively playful ones, and Rose was a great favourite with her. Grace was too old to be treated as a child, and Miss Stone was not fond of girls of her age, she thought the schoolroom and hard work the only proper things for them. While therefore Blanche was fondled, and Rose indulged till she became almost unmanageable, Grace was treated with something rather like harshness.

What more Rose would have said is doubtful, but just then Miss Stone came in, and even she was afraid of being scolded if found at the top of the bookcase, so she slipped behind the deep cornice and hid herself.

"What are you doing, girls?" asked Miss Stone, "I heard much more noise than I like, you cannot have been steadily at work. Grace, you are really very idle, at your age I should have thought you would have tried to do better and to improve. Go and sit down to your books at once; and Blanche, darling, be ready



for Mr. Paston. I shall come back in a minute or two, and see how you are getting on."

When the door was shut Rose peeped up rather quieted, but would not come down. Grace went to her desk thinking it useless to say more to her, and Blanche took her lesson in hand. It was rather harder than she had expected, and in a minute or two there was a petition that her cousin would help her. Grace's time had been much taken up in this way very frequently since they had lost Miss Chertsey, but she never refused her assistance, and soon showed Blanche the way through her difficulty. She then looked up again to Rose who was trying by curious noises to call her sister's attention to herself, and said, "Now, Rose dear, let me help you down, and then we can look at your lesson."

"I can get down when I like," said Rose, "and I will look over my lesson while you and Blanche are with Mr. Paston."

But hardly had she finished her sentence, when Miss Stone was heard coming towards the schoolroom, and Rose began to think it time to descend.

"Let me help you, or call Brunton," cried Grace, seeing she was not setting about her descent very cleverly. "Do wait a moment." But Rose was in a hurry, and would neither wait nor accept her cousin's help, and being a little frightened besides, she did not manage getting down as cleverly as she had getting up, the consequence being that several volumes came

tumbling on the floor, and she had to spring down among them to save herself from a fall, altogether making a great deal of noise and dust. In the instant Rose made her jump from the bookcase Miss Stone entered, and stood astonished at the noise, the fallen books, and the general confusion. "This is worse than before," she said, "I wished you to be quiet, and you have been more disorderly and wild than ever. Grace, you could have kept better order, instead of joining in child's play, but you are not to be trusted without a governess I believe. Go up stairs to your room, and there study your lessons for to-morrow. Blanche dear, go to the piano, I want you to play me your last tune, and Rosie, do pick the books up."

Grace went away directly, for she could not explain matters without blaming Rose, but she felt the injustice of Miss Stone's conduct. It was certainly very different from what her aunt or Miss Chertsey would have done. She heard Blanche say, "It was not Grace's fault indeed:" but the reply was only, "She ought to have known better."

Very sad Grace went to her room and putting the books down looked mournfully from her window on the street far below. A sound of pat pat was heard on the stairs, then a scratching and whining at the door, Muffie who had a wonderful way of finding out if anything went wrong with his mistress, had come to look after her. Grace admitted him, the soft liquid eyes of the dog gazed at her with that expression

which sensible dogs have who are accustomed to be much with human beings, and know their joys and sorrows. Grace sat down on the carpet with Muffie in her lap, the two who had danced so joyously on the sands together now clinging to each other in grief. The dog's mute fondness brought the tears to Grace's eyes, and quick thoughts came of past times, of a loving arm which had shielded her, and of kind advice, or reproof so just, so loving. She looked naturally up to her picture, a calmer expression came to her countenance. "No, Muffie," she said, "we won't fret. She did not mean to be unkind, she thought I had been idle really." Stroking her dumb friend gently and affectionately Grace put him down, and rose. She stood before the picture, and all thoughts of injustice and of complaining vanished. Again she pondered on the holy words traced below it; "He was subject unto them," not only to Mary who pondered His sayings, not only to Joseph the faithful Guardian of His Holy Childhood, but to the usurping king, to the heathen governor. "He pleased not Himself." How much of bitter reproach, of false accusation had He to bear!

Grace had striven hard to subdue selfishness, to follow that example to Whom her father had turned her eyes, and His Spirit had helped her to do so. She did not feel now vexed or angry, not even jealous of the preference shown her younger cousins; there were none but kind thoughts in her mind towards them; though

Rose had been treating her ill, and had been the cause of her present disgrace.

She turned cheerfully to her books, after a few minutes, and employed herself as she had been desired.

Unfortunately Mr. Paston was tired when he came, and perhaps made rather impatient by the hot sun through which he had walked, for his lesson did not go on smoothly. He took Blanche first, and her badly written exercise vexed him, then he wished Rose to read, and found that she was not ready, so that the few mistakes in Grace's work occasioned chiefly by the noise and play while she wrote it, received a much severer censure than he had ever given before, and there were no smiles that afternoon. Miss Stone who sat by was not pleased at all with the progress of the lesson, and when the master was gone spoke of the evils of idleness to the three girls. Rose and Blanche were soon forgiven, but keeping to her first idea that Grace ought to have managed better in making the schoolroom quiet she continued to treat her as in disgrace, and left her at home when she took the two others for a drive.

Blanche was indignant when she found that her cousin was not to accompany them, and begged either to be left with her or to have Grace go in the carriage, but she was refused. "I daresay Grace forgot she was older, and ought to have done better," replied Miss Stone, "she must make up for lost time. I will have nothing more said about it."

So with a great deal of self-reproach in which Rose shared, now she found her cousin was really punished for her fault, Blanche took her seat, but the drive gave her very little pleasure, and Grace's short walk in the gardens with Nurse Brunton was far happier, for she had that inward pleasure which brightens the dulllest scenes, of feeling loving and kind to all, and she chatted pleasantly to her old friend that the walk might be cheerful to her.

On her return she went into the schoolroom to write out fair her afternoon's lesson as Mr. Paston had desired her to do. She had just finished when the servant came up to the room and said, "Can you see Daniel, Miss? he wants very particularly to speak to you."

Grace had not seen the boy for some time, and she gave a willing permission for him to come up to her. When he came in she noticed that he was grown taller and stouter already, and seemed neatly dressed. He was struck with her deep mourning, and perhaps with her paleness, for he looked shy, and after a minute's hesitation said, "Oh, Miss Alford, I am very sorry."

It was not quite plain whether he was sorry for her or for some grief of his own, most probably both feelings were in his mind. He said he was very well, in answer to her inquiries, he liked his master who was very kind, and the foreman, and he was to be more than errand-boy soon, but there was some great grief behind.

At last it burst forth in a sob, which all Daniel's

young manliness could not check. "O! Miss Alford, that woman, if you had seen Lizzy! And little Jemmy too," he added with a flush of anger on his cheek.

"Mrs. Jones has not hurt them, she has not treated them ill?" exclaimed Grace, her face tinged with crimson.

"Has she not!" cried the boy passionately. "If you could have seen Lizzy's arms and neck, so bruised, and little Jemmy! She is a bad one! I beg your pardon, Miss," he added checking himself, "but I could not bear to see it, and she does not give them enough to eat, they look not a bit like the same as they did with Mrs. Page." He stopped, for Grace's tears were flowing fast, and wiped his own eyes with his sleeve.

"When did you see them?" she asked as soon as she could speak, for she was deeply grieved about the little girls, and her own orphanhood perhaps made her feel more acutely.

"Last night, Miss," he replied, "I got leave to go to see after them, for I thought on Sunday all was not right, Mrs. Jones would not let me take them for a walk or stay five minutes with them. So master gave me leave to go last evening, and she gave me bad words, and said I had no business there. And worst of all she will learn them bad things, I mind that a'most as much as beating them."

"What is to be done?" sighed Grace, "I can't go to them, and my uncle and aunt are not at home." She thought a moment and said, "Have

you told the foreman ? perhaps he could tell us of some one who might receive them."

"I told him I thought they were badly treated," said Daniel, "and he only said that children put out to nurse were very often ill-used ; but he did not know of anyone to take them."

"Could you ask him to tell Mr. Osborne your master ? perhaps he might know what to do. Poor children—it is very hard for them !"

"I think I'll tell him how 'tis to-night, and see what he thinks I'd better do," said Daniel, feeling himself the only natural guardian of his little sisters. He could not stay longer, and, thanking Grace for her kind sympathy in his troubles, ran home to consult the foreman, in whom, however, he had very little hope.

Long did Grace lie awake that night, thinking what could be done for the little motherless ones, whom she was so fond of. . She was an orphan ; her pillow had often been wet with tears, which in the quiet silent night would flow when her father's image came before her, and the hope of seeing her mother became fainter, but she had kind friends and a home. How to help them she knew not, and in her loneliness she prayed that the FATHER of the fatherless would watch over them both, and guide her to help those who were even more desolate than herself ; those who had a father indeed, but the memory of her lost parent was more help, more comfort to Grace than their living one was to them.

## CHAPTER XI.

“Be gentle to the little child.”

TWO days afterwards, just as the three children were amusing themselves in the drawing-room after their early dinner, a card was brought in announcing “Mrs. Osborne,” and that lady (the wife of the gentleman in whose service Daniel was) came in apologising for calling, as she did not know Mrs. Stopford, but saying that business must be her excuse. She asked which was Miss Alford, and then told Grace that the foreman had mentioned to Mr. Osborne a sad case of ill-treatment of two little girls, sisters of the errand-boy.

“My husband inquired himself into it,” continued Mrs. Osborne, “and learned the history of the children from Daniel, and what you had done for them. Daniel spoke very warmly of the kindness he had received, and he said that you would remove the little girls if a better home could be found for them.”

“My aunt has been very kind to them,” said Grace; “and I am sure she would not like them to stay where they are if Mrs. Jones is unkind to them. But she and my elder cousins who managed for them are away.”

“I came to say,” returned Mrs. Osborne, “that I know of a very good home for girls who have lost their mothers, which is now open, and would be the very thing for these poor children.



They would be well cared for, and have everything they required, with real attention and kindness. The lady who superintends it is very fond of children, and would do a mother's part to them, and there they might remain till you could find places for them in service."

"And at what expense?" said Grace. "How could they be got into this place?"

"I am a subscriber," replied Mrs. Osborne, "and I can nominate one, and my sister the other. Then the father and friends must pay ten pounds a year for them by a quarter in advance."

"We have paid more than that altogether," said Grace, "including their clothes and Lizzy's schooling, but will they be clothed and taught at this home?"

"Their clothing is given them, though any extra help in that way will be acceptable, and they will attend the parish school (except on Saturdays and Sundays) in the morning. The matron, or the lady who takes charge of the home, teaches work in the afternoon."

Miss Stone then said that she thought Mrs. Stopford might be written to for her approval of the change, which might be made immediately, if she consented.

"That would be best," replied Mrs. Osborne; "and my dear (turning to Grace) let me know, if you please, what Mrs. Stopford decides."

She then rose to go, and Grace, blushing, thanked her for her kindness, and promised to write that day to her aunt.

Mrs. Stopford's answer was not long delayed. She gave free leave to Grace to put the two children into Mrs. Osborne's hands, and said that the payment of the sum required should be arranged duly. She thought, however, that before removing the girls they ought to be quite satisfied that Mrs. Jones had betrayed her trust. Miss Stone was of the same opinion, and she decided to take Grace and go herself to Mrs. Jones's apartment, that they might learn the truth. So at the time when they were likely to find Lizzy home from school she and Grace drove to the court where Mrs. Jones lived. It was a different place, indeed, from the lanes, or small yet clean rows where Grace had long ago visited the poor with her mother, and she sighed at the thought of children like herself living where no pure fresh air seemed able to come, where only a little bit of sky could be seen, and the only thing that reminded you of flower and herb was a few sickly plants here and there in a window.

The carriage was left outside the alley which led to the court, and Miss Stone and her young companion inquired for Mrs. Jones. A neighbour directed them to her room; it was locked up, and the voice of Lizzy inside informed them that Mrs. Jones was out.

"Cannot you open the door?" asked Grace.

"No, it's locked," said Lizzy. "Mrs. Jones has taken the key."

Further inquiry discovered that Mrs. Jones had been out nearly all day, and had kept

back Lizzy from school to mind her sister, locking both into her room. She would be home very soon Lizzy thought, as it was late in the afternoon.

Miss Stone desired the children to say nothing about their visitors, and told Grace she would order the carriage to drive round out of those streets, and bring them back in an hour's time. When they returned they found the door open; but Mrs. Jones was gone into a neighbour's, so the children were alone. On seeing Grace, Jemmy ran up to her crying, and Lizzy came and stood close to her in awe of Miss Stone. Both little ones were much changed from the neat healthy children they had been four months before. Their faces, pale and blotched, showed they had been badly fed; their frocks were dirty and ragged, and as they came close to her, Grace saw with indignation and grief that their arms and backs were marked with blows.

With tears in her eyes she pointed this out to Miss Stone, who examined the state of the poor little things, and found that they must indeed have been very ill-used, and their removal from such *care* was quite necessary. Grace gave them each a cake she had brought on purpose. Lizzy had not forgotten to say, "Thank you," but her sister caught at the food, and began to devour it almost fiercely. It was not necessary to ask much, and Lizzy plainly feared a beating if she told anything about Mrs. Jones, but Miss Stone's mind was made up, and when, after a few minutes the

woman returned, she said that they had called on Mrs. Stopford's behalf to see the children, and felt that they must be removed, as proper care had not been taken of them.

Mrs. Jones was furious, accusing the children of telling lies, and of being the most contrary bad girls in the world ; but at length Miss Stone's quiet stern manner awed her, and she was silent. Lizzy and Jemmy had meantime clung crying to Grace. As soon as Mrs. Jones was still, Miss Stone told her that she should fetch the children on the following afternoon, and expected to find them thoroughly clean and in tidy clothes, and if any further beating was used she should not pass it by. She then led Grace away, and comforted her by saying that it was not likely Mrs. Jones would do anything more to hurt the children, since she would fear herself to be punished.

Grace, however, had very little peace till all was arranged, and she had gone with Miss Stone to fetch the little girls, and seen them introduced by Mrs. Osborne to their new home, where the happy faces of the little ones already there gave pledge of their well-doing.

## CHAPTER XII.

“ In duty’s path God bids His blessings flow.”

**I**T was a clear morning after some days of rough weather at Plymouth, the waves still dashed high against the breakwater, and the water within was still troubled by the late winds. Experienced sailors said that the weather was not preparing to be fine, but only waiting for another storm to blow up. However landmen were ready to believe in the promise of a clearing sky, and to wonder why some ships which had put into the harbour did not leave it.

In a house which commanded the noble view towards Mount Edgecombe and the breakwater, Mrs. Stopford and her girls were staying; for after Ella’s recovery, sea-air had been so much recommended that she had accepted the invitation of a friend to bring her young people on a visit to Devonport. All were glad to escape from the town, and for Grace the entire change was as much needed as for Ella, and her aunt hoped that the sea-breezes would bring back some colour to her pale cheeks. Grace was better for her release from the town life, and the close application to study to which Miss Stone had kept her during her period of authority, but it was grief and anxiety which really made her look ill. Her father’s death was a severe blow; still it was one that could

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be borne in submission and resignation; but her mother's fate was uncertain, and whether she were living or dead was quite unknown to her child. Each month had Grace hoped for some letter, some news that might tell of her safety, and this anxiety was more wearing than the sorrow would have been of knowing that she, too, had been taken from this life.

Little grief, however, marred the pleasure of Rose and Blanche at having a complete holiday—Ella well again, and Netta ready to take them out and contrive excursions for them. On this morning Mrs. Stopford was going to take her whole party to spend the afternoon at a friend's house in the country, but soon after breakfast Rose darted into the drawing-room, saying that Colonel Seymour, a friend of her father, had met her in the garden, and given her an invitation for some of the party to join his two daughters in a boating excursion to the breakwater.

"O, mamma, it would be so much more pleasant than going to play in the garden at Mrs. Granville's: I have been wanting to go on the water all the week, and to-day is the first day there has been a chance."

"You cannot go alone, Rose, with the Misses Seymour, and I don't suppose any one else will like to miss the visit to Mrs. Granville. Her girls are your sisters' friends, and Grace will like to see the pictures," was Mrs. Stopford's reply.

"Oh, but let Blanche go and me, mamma."

"The sea is not very quiet," said Blanche, "I am afraid, it makes me feel ill only to look at it close."

"Nonsense, Blanche, Colonel Seymour would not go if it was dangerous; but I am afraid you would be ill, because you were two years ago. Oh dear, and I want so very much to go!"

Grace had heard all this as she sat reading, and thought she would offer. Only to lose the sight of the pictures was very disappointing; she did wish so much to see some fine paintings at Mrs. Granville's, and yet, so late in the autumn was it getting, that Rose might not have another opportunity of seeing the breakwater.

"Aunt, may I go with Colonel Seymour?" she said.

"Certainly, if you like it, my love, but I should have thought the pictures would be more attractive to you."

"I shall like to see the breakwater," said Grace, and Rose highly pleased, embraced her, and ran off to ask when they must be at the boat.

All the morning Rose watched the weather, but it continued fair, though some threatening clouds were about. She urged Grace to be very punctual, but her impatience was obliged to be kept in check, for when they reached Colonel Seymour's they found him engaged with a visitor, so that the expedition was delayed for some time. At last much to her satisfaction they were really in the boat and off.

Though it had been entirely for the sake of her cousin that Grace had offered to go, she did enjoy the row very much. The lights and shadows on the water, the tossing over waves, high enough to be exciting, though not rough enough to be dangerous, the beauty of Mount Edgecombe, and the interest of various vessels lying in the harbour from different nations made the voyage very pleasant. The wind was against them, however, and it took a long time to reach the breakwater. When the boat arrived Colonel Seymour made his party land, and walk down it, in order to examine and admire one of the most wonderful works of art that has ever been erected as a defence against the power of the ocean. Strong and wide in its deep foundations it rises like a ledge of rock, and extending a considerable length, it beats back the stormy swell of the Atlantic, and guards from the violence of the sea the vessels which seek the friendly shelter of the harbour within. At one end a lighthouse holds out its friendly beacon to the mariner.

While Colonel Seymour and his young party were on the breakwater, they saw several ships making for the entrance to the Sound, for to a sailor's eye the weather promised a tempestuous night. Foremost was a large East Indiaman, which was rapidly nearing. They watched her for some time, till the change in the light made Colonel Seymour hurry the young people into his boat, that they might reach home before it should be quite dark. "Row as quickly as you



can, men," he said, "it is much later than I intended to be out."

He looked rather anxiously at the sky, for while they had been walking, heavy clouds had gathered and were bringing early darkness. The wind too was blowing in gusts which made rowing more laborious. The two Misses Seymour were rather anxious, fearing that the weather might make the Sound dangerous, and begged their father to desire the men to beware of the bar, which he did. All were rather silent, and wrapped their shawls closer round them as the wind blew more chill and rough. Grace watched the struggling gleams of light which came through the openings in the clouds, and played over the sea with a watery brightness, and thought of her father and mother. No vessel might ever bring him back from India's palm shade. He was at Home indeed, where there is no more sea to part the children of God ; but her mother. Had she too passed through a short scene of agony and joined him ? Was she too in the glorious Land, or was she yet on earth ? Was she in suffering or in the midst of fear and peril ? Was she ever again on earth to be with her longing child ? The gathering darkness shut out now all distant scenes, the guardships and hulks were lighted near the shore, and but slowly the boat made way. Suddenly a sound as of a ship in rapid motion came close, close upon them. The boat's head quickly turned, a cry of alarm, a black shadow swallowing them up, the vast waves around ! A wild

shriek rung for a moment, then a shout, "Cling to the boat," and Grace found herself in the water. Naturally she flung out her arms, and caught at the boat, but she was dragged down by the terrified grasp of Rose who had been sitting next her, and the waves tossed the vessel from her hold.

The large East Indiaman had come suddenly on them in the gloom, and ere the steersman perceived that she was bearing down right on them, she was too close for the boat to be quickly turned in the midst of the tossing waves. Happily the steam was being let off, and the vessel lessening her speed a life-buoy was thrown out immediately, as the shrieks told the officer of the watch that mischief had happened, and as soon as possible a boat was lowered to pick up the crew of the submerged bark.

When Grace became conscious again a face met her wakening eye, which made her feel that another world was entered. "Heaven," she murmured faintly, and her eyes closed again. A clasp of her hand—Oh, how fond!—a kiss sealed—how warmly on her brow!—and the words "My child!" uttered in tones longed for through many a weary day and tearful night, made her feel conscious of her mother's presence ere she had recovered strength again to look up. Scarcely revived from the shock of drowning, she knew not if she were still on earth, or whether it was in another world she had joined her mother. But the fresh wild breeze blew over her, the waves dashed against

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the ship's side, full consciousness returned, and she opened her eyes, on the sweet face which for so long she had only seen in dreams, or pictured in the longing thoughts of day. The joy was overpowering: with one cry of "Mother, my own mother," she flung herself on her bosom, clinging fast round her.

"Thank God!" was all Mrs. Alford could say, as she folded her arms round her child, so unexpectedly brought to her from such peril. All had been picked up from the water, and Grace herself was the last to be rescued; so when she was recovered there was nothing to mar the joy of this meeting, and the whole party forgot their danger and alarm in the surprise and delight of seeing one who had been believed lost restored to her own land and her friends again.

Mrs. Alford was not alone, and when Grace at length looked up she saw a pale sickly-looking lady with a dark-eyed little girl watching her; while beside the sofa on which she had been laid knelt a Hindoo, gazing on her with tears on his swarthy cheeks. So mingled had such forms been with Grace's dreams of horror that she could only shudder at the first moment she caught sight of the turbaned head and piercing eyes; but the next moment the Hindoo was almost worshipping her, and calling her endearing names in a voice broken by grief. "Sivaji," whispered Mrs. Alford, and Grace repeated the name, bending over the faithful servant—"Sivaji, papa's Sivaji."

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"Yes, missy," said the Hindoo, "poor Sivaji, Colonel Alford's servant. Don't cry, missy; him very good man, him happy now."

But in spite of this entreaty Grace's tears flowed on, and she felt her hand wet with those of her father's loving soldier, as he pressed it to his lips.

Colonel Seymour had meanwhile made preparations for landing his party, and he persuaded Mrs. Alford to accompany them, as she could return to the vessel if she pleased on the following day. Grace still seemed to dread losing sight for an instant of her mother, and clung to her, and so she consented to leave the invalid whom she had taken charge of for that night.

Great was the joy when, on the return of Mrs. Stopford from her visit rather later than the arrival of the party from the boat, she learnt that her sister-in-law was safe, and under her roof. It was a joy, chastened and sober, for Mrs. Alford had returned a widow, and amid all the gladness of receiving her there mingled the thought of him who was gone from them, and whose return could never be welcomed to his native land.

"I thought you would have been expecting me about this time," said Mrs. Alford, when the first burst of welcome and gladness was over. "Did not you receive my letters from Madras?"

"We have never heard of you," replied Mrs. Stopford, "since your letter before leaving your own station. Edgar Savile's letters to his

mother have given the only certain information we have had."

"Then mine were lost," replied Mrs. Alford; "I wrote to Grace after my own escape, and when I was recovering from a fever which followed, but Sivaji told me he could not be certain of the fidelity of the messenger. I wrote again before sailing, but that letter must also have miscarried."

"We certainly never had it," said Mrs. Stopford, "and we feared the worst, though we tried to keep up hope."

The young people would have wished to hear something of their aunt's dangers and escape, but Mrs. Alford could not dwell upon them that evening, and they only heard that she had been exposed to very great peril, and that Sivaji had been the means of saving her from the most imminent danger, together with a lady whose husband, brother and sons had been killed by the mutinous Sepoys, and who had since remained under her care. Grace was quite content to have her mother again, and sat on a stool at her feet holding her hand, her heart being much too full for words. She could not yet care to know how she had been restored to her; it was enough that she was there.

All felt it a relief to join in the prayer of thanksgiving which closed the evening, and in that to offer up the deep feelings which they could not express to each other to Him Who reads the heart.

### CHAPTER XIII.

“ Old friends, old scenes will lovelier be,  
As more of Heaven in each we see.”

“ **A**ND so we shall see the dear old place again,” said Grace, after listening to a conversation between her mother and uncle, in which the plans for Mrs. Alford’s future residence had been discussed. Her uncle had left the room, and laying down her work, she came and sat beside her mother. “ It will seem so natural to be there again,” she continued. “ I wonder if our cottage is let.”

Mrs. Alford sighed, and tears were in her eyes—the return to old scenes, the fixing her abode again where she had known so much happiness, brought vividly to her the remembrance of him who was not now at hand to guide her plans, to give his ever-ready counsel and help.

“ Yes, Grace,” she said; “ but if we are to receive Mrs. Ryce and Nora that cottage will not be large enough for us. You have thought well over the plan for them to live with us, have you, my child? It will make a great difference to us, for we shall have them to think of, and we shall not have the same freedom as we could if alone together. Mrs. Ryce is an invalid, very much shaken in nerves, and always accustomed to be waited on, and made much of,

and Nora has never known any training or control, so you will find her a spoilt child."

"Oh, yes, dear mamma," replied Grace, kneeling beside her mother in her old way, "I have thought of what you said, and if you can give up your quiet and provide for them, I shall try in all I can to help you. Poor Mrs. Ryce has had such sad sorrows it will be so nice to help to comfort and nurse her, and when Nora has been with us a little while I dare say she will get on with me. I will be very kind to her."

"If I did not feel sure, love, that you could deny yourself, and be gentle and patient, I should never have thought of taking my fellow-sufferer to our home. But she has none, and no relatives in England; so Gracey, if you do not think you will find it too great a trial, we will ask Mrs. Ryce to share our home."

"I will do all I can, dear mamma, for her, and if we can comfort her, and make her less sad and downcast, how pleasant it will be."

Mrs. Alford knew that the task would be a hard one, but she saw Grace's unselfish gentle ways; she saw that love ruled her conduct, and she felt that she might safely offer a home to the widow and orphan whose circumstances would have made it hard for them to procure one for themselves. Mrs. Ryce was the widow of a lieutenant, and though not very well off even in her husband's lifetime, she had given way to the indolence and luxury only too common in India, and by so doing had weakened her nerves and

her mind till, when heavy sorrow came, she sank under it into a state of dejection and helplessness really pitiable. Mrs. Alford took charge of her and her child on the voyage home to England, and found her office no sinecure, from the weak health and indulged despondency of the mother, and the waywardness of the petted child. Her kindness, however, had so won upon Mrs. Ryce that she would in any case have felt it painful to be parted from her, and was very thankful when, after having talked the matter over with Grace, so comfortable a home was offered by Mrs. Alford.

"And I shall be able to teach Nora," said Grace, after a pause; "she is so much younger than I am."

"You will, I hope, teach her a good deal, Gracey, but not regular lessons, for I must have a governess for you both. My time will be a good deal taken up by Mrs. Ryce, so that I shall not be able to give you as much attention as your studies will require now, and you are too young to attempt Nora's education alone. Still, a great deal of her real education will depend on you, and all that kindness, right principle and good example can do, you will, I am sure, love, try to do for her."

"Indeed I will," said Grace; "and though we shall not be all to ourselves, we can be together, and have a good talk sometimes, mother. Oh, it is so very happy to have you!" and she nestled again close to her mother.



The Exmouth plan was soon arranged: Mr. Stopford found a nice house in a good situation for his sister, and assisted in settling everything comfortably for her, and in a few weeks she and Grace, with Mrs. Ryce and Nora, were able to take possession of it.

Grace's departure was much regretted by her cousins; she had grown very dear to them all. It was so pleasant to have one who never seemed to think of herself, who was always ready to help anyone, and yet whose obedience and steadiness prevented her from getting anyone into a scrape by mere goodnature. Each found they would miss her companionship, and Rose, who had oftenest teased her and pretended to think her stupid, remarked, in her odd, sententious way, that when people went away their virtues showed more than while they were living with you.

Daniel came up to receive the parting present of a neat conveniently made desk, and brought the good news that he was no longer to be errand-boy, but to be employed in accounts and real business under the foreman: or as Rose triumphantly remarked, he had entered on the third chapter of the true and remarkable story to be entitled "Daniel and his Broom." He spoke in a warm, but manly way as he thanked Grace for all her kindness, and said that he hoped to show he was grateful, and that all his friends had done had not been in vain. One piece of information was given quite in private to herself: he said, while his cheek flushed with

pleasure, that the rector of the church he attended had taken him into his own special class of boys for instruction on Sunday, and had told him he would prepare him for confirmation. Thus she had the satisfaction of knowing him to be in good hands, and with every prospect of doing well.

She could take leave of his sisters, also, without any anxiety for their present well-doing. Both the little girls were recovering from the ill effects of Mrs. Jones's treatment, and the lady, in whose Home they were, gave a fair account of their conduct. There were some tears when Grace told them she was going a long way off, and should not be able to see them again for some time: but the way in which they turned to the lady in whose charge they were convinced her that they already felt her kindness and were happy, and she unselfishly rejoiced that their new friend had won their love.

That task of charity was left in others' hands, but new ones would open before her in her home, and to one who, like Grace, has learnt to watch for opportunities of exercising love, and following the steps of CHRIST, there is ever work at hand.

One task was ready for her in doing an elder sister's part to Nora Ryce, and the very first day they were together in travelling down to Devonshire showed Grace that it would require all her gentleness and self-command to deal kindly and rightly with the little eight-year-

old tyrant, who had been accustomed to find her every fancy humoured till she had become a torment to herself, as well as to those about her. Mrs. Alford watched the two girls, and felt hopeful that Grace's liveliness and affection, together with her absence of self-consciousness would by degrees have a good effect on Nora.

The journey was over at length; a rather weary one in the chilly autumn day, and the whole party was glad to rest. But the next morning Grace was eager to renew her remembrances of Exmouth, and she took Nora out for an hour after breakfast on the sands, and showed her the rocks where she had been used to play. How very long it seemed since that summer; when she and Muffie had danced there, and her shoes had been washed away. How much had happened since her father walked on those sands with her, and talked to her of the Home at Nazareth? Many thoughts came into Grace's mind and while Nora picked up shells and played with Muffie, she dwelt on what he had said to her, and on his life, which had been indeed framed after that Pattern he pointed out to her; and raising her eyes to the clear autumn sky, she prayed for grace ever to follow those Holy Steps, which he had led her first to walk in,—prayed that the spirit of love and obedience might be more and more shown in her.

Nora soon claimed her attention again, and it was time to return home. On the way she met

Annie Savile, who was coming to see her with Miss Chertsey.

"Oh, Grace, I am so glad you are here," said Annie, "Lucy wants to see you once more, she has been wishing you were come."

"I will take my new sister home," said Grace, "and come with you if mamma can spare me."

Mrs. Alford would not detain Miss Chertsey or Annie from the dying girl, but herself accompanied Grace to Mrs. Savile's.

It was the last visit to Lucy. Calmly, even cheerfully she spoke to her friends, thanking them for coming to her, and saying she was now going Home, where she hoped to meet them in God's good time. As all through her short life, so now, Lucy was patient and content, but a more heavenly peace was on her countenance than ever before, she had long been resigned to God's Will, now she felt glad that He called her to His rest. Mrs. Alford did not stay long, for Lucy soon appeared quite exhausted, and she feared that Grace's sorrow would distress her.

It was a great trial to the latter to see her friend so near death, though she knew Lucy was quite at peace, and it brought her father's loss so vividly to her mind that she could not control herself as she wished to do, and when they had left the house she wept bitterly. Mrs. Alford sat down with her on the beach, which was then quite solitary, and by degrees calmed her by speaking of the rest awaiting Lucy after

her long sufferings, and of that bond of union which unites both the living and the dead who are CHRIST's in one.

"I wish I could have seen papa, once more," said Grace, as she checked her sobs, "but I ought not to wish that," she added, remembering that she might distress her mother. "It could not be."

"We will not think of the earthly parting, dearest, or complain of our loss," said Mrs. Alford tenderly, "let us rather try to prepare to meet again in the Home our FATHER's love has promised."

She paused a moment, it was the first time Grace had given way to grief, or shown how much she felt her father's loss, for she had been trying in every way to cheer her mother, and they had spoken scarcely at all of him who was in the thoughts of both. Then Mrs. Alford continued, "You were in his mind, Grace, especially that day he left me, and when he had written those few lines to you, he said, 'Poor child, she will have perhaps a hard cross to bear, but if it is so, bid her trust the perfect love which sends it. I hope she may find that which is the secret of all peace, loving confidence in GOD, and love to all men.' He had found that happiness himself, and it was the foundation of his even cheerful temper, and calm life."

"And sudden death was not sad to him," said Grace, in a low voice.

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"No, love," and Mrs. Alford repressed her involuntary shudder at the remembrance, "I believe it was but a swift messenger to bring him to his Master. Ours is the sadness," she added, "but we will bear it in hope."

Grace's head sank on her mother's shoulder, and so in silence they sat a few minutes, and then returned home.

When late that evening the sound of the passing bell reached Grace, as she was preparing for rest, she was able to feel thankful that Lucy's weary suffering was over, and that she was sleeping in hope of a waking to full happiness on the Eternal morning. Her death drew Annie more to her friend, and Grace and she were as sisters in their love to each other, which was strengthened by the sorrows both had shared.

But we must not follow Grace now into her riper years, or describe how the lesson of unselfishness, early taught, was practised day by day. In her gentle care for the invalid, in bearing Nora's wilfulness, and patiently leading her on to obedience, in active kindness to the poor, she showed that she was not pleasing herself. In submission to petty vexations or greater trials, in obedience to her teachers, and acceptance of the events ordered for her, she was subject to the Will of her Heavenly FATHER. In her conduct, as she grew on, Grace was enabled to follow still that Holy Example which had been the guide of her childhood, and to understand more as she

practised it, the lesson taught by the picture so dearly prized, both for its own holy subject, and as the last gift of her father.

One more remark and we close our story. It is by little efforts day by day that we must overcome selfishness in its various forms; it is by constant endeavours in daily trials, and occurrences, the spirit of love is fostered, and by looking continually to the Fountain of all Love.

JANUARY, 1865.

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